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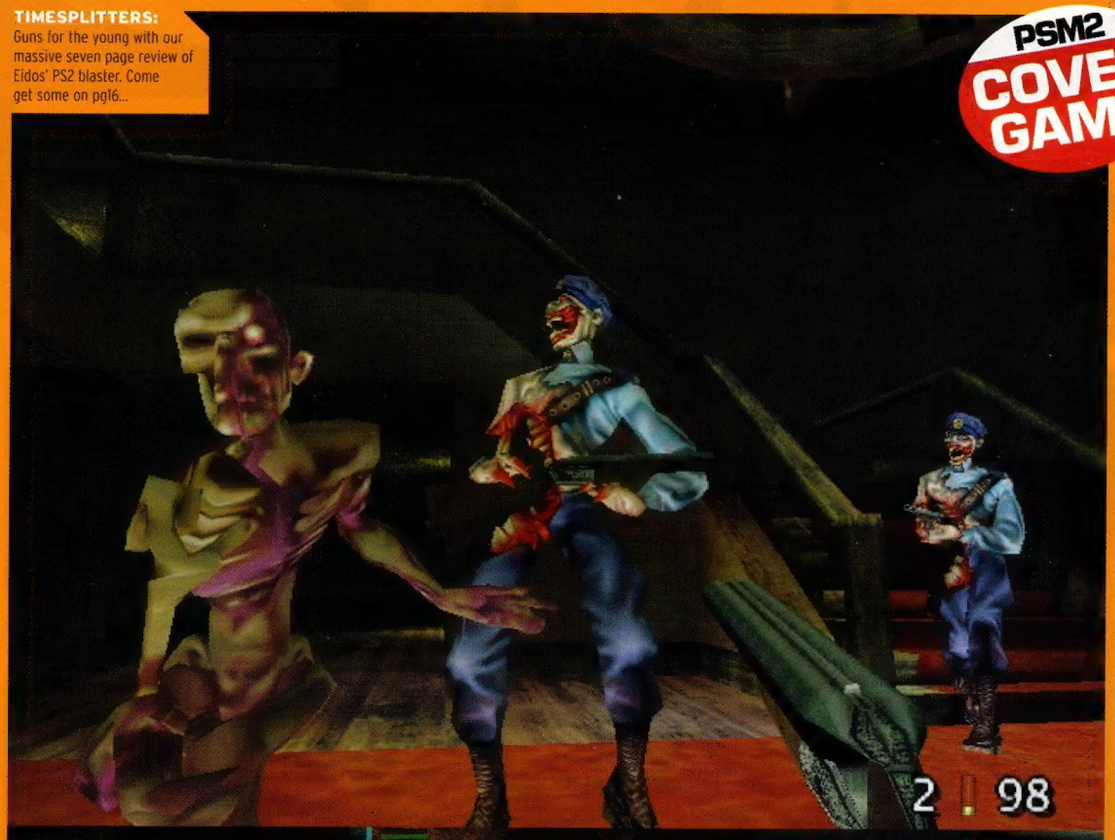
NEW GAMES!

EVERY PLAYSTATION 2 GAME IN THIS ISSUE OF PSM2

TIMESPLITTERS:
Guns for the young with our massive seven page review of Eidos' PS2 blaster. Come get some on pg16...

PSM2 COVER GAME



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What PSM2 stands for...
If you're reading this, you, like us, clearly give a damn about the little details. It's that level of detail which PSM2 is all about. We want to show you what it's like to feel the rain on the screen in *Metal Gear Solid 2*, watch the sun set on your village in *Dark Cloud*, and floor an Audi TT around central London in *The Getaway*. PSM2's all about cracking 268 in *Tekken Bowl*, getting a review score totally *right*, staying up too late and the brilliance of THAT blue light. It's your fat-free guide to the Emotion Engine experience.

What PSM2 isn't about, is piss-poor, seen-it-before features on girls 'n' games or game violence. It's not about *those Japs* being mad or D-list celebrities playing some random title. Instead, we'll cut out the usual clichéd trash and get on with the stuff that matters to PS2 people.

We know more than anyone else about PS2 and PS2 gaming, and all the journalists that write for the magazine are the most informed and passionately honest game fans you'll meet. PSM2 plays longer, harder, faster than any other mag. You won't be bored for a second.

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READY 2 RUMBLE: ROUND 2 TIMESPLITTERS ORPHEN
FIFA 2001 ISS MOTO GP MADDEN NFL 2001 TEKKEN TAG TOURNAMENT
RING OF RED ESPN INTERNATIONAL TRACK AND FIELD TOP GEAR DARE
NHL 2001 ESPN WINTER X GAMES AND MORE...

YOU'RE HERE. WE'RE HERE AND, FINALLY, IT'S HERE. CRACK THE BUBBLY AND LET'S PARTY.

You're probably reading this at four o'clock in the morning after only just pulling yourself away from the sleek new piece of kit nestling beneath your TV. Well, go make some strong coffee and settle in as we take the sting out of those concerns that'll soon plague your dreams. What game should I go for next? What does the future hold for PS2? Will I need to get a Hard Drive? Sssh, don't worry, everything's going to be just fine.

Why? Because we've done most of the hard work for you already this issue. We've answered your questions is our massive FAQ feature (pg54), kept an eye on your cash with our cutting reviews (pg62), tipped the games you really all should own (pg108) and shown you a glimpse of tomorrow (pg24). But we're not resting on our proverbial laurels. Oh no. As soon as we've cleared up the streamers, empties and mashed vol-au-vents we'll be setting our sights on one of the most exciting years a console has ever had ahead of it. Catch up with us next issue as we take you into the revolutionary realm of 2001, and don't forget to pack your factor 31 and opaque shades. This is one bright future we're looking at... **PSM2**

Marcus Hawkins Editor
marcus.hawkins@futurenet.co.uk

IN A NUTSHELL

PSM2 is...
... intelligent, enthusiastic, comprehensive, escapist, entertaining. Japanese savvy, it's written and read by committed gamers and is passionately honest about PlayStation 2. It also likes to make its readers laugh out loud.

PSM2 is...
... the place to come for the quirky and non-mainstream side of PlayStation 2, as well as the big name games. It knows as much about *Baki the Grappler* as it does about *Tekken Tag* – if you read PSM2 you *will* know more.

PLAYSTATION 2 MAGAZINE

PSM2

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PLAYING PS2 LONGER, HARDER, FASTER

タテイスカンチニシミモ

スカラシサ

PSM2 COVER GAME

PAGE 16 BLAST TO THE PAST

TimeSplitters sets the PS2 alight as Eidos take the first-person shooter to new levels. Join PSM2 as we wade knee-deep in shell cases and wake up to smell the cordite in our massive six-page review.

ESPN WINTER X GAMES ..... **PAGE 80**
Find out if Konami's boarder pushes *SSX* off piste.

SUPER BUST-A-MOVE ..... **PAGE 84**
More bubble mayhem as Bub and Bob grace PS2.

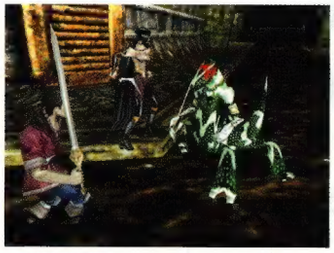
NHL 2001 ..... **PAGE 82**
Find out if EA can conquer their *NHL* 'odd year jinx'.

READY 2 RUMBLE 2 ..... **PAGE 64**
Gloves are all you need, in Midway's tongue-in-cheek puncher.

ESPN TRACK & FIELD ..... **PAGE 76**
Going for gold? Or a nightmare on the field of dreams?

MADDEN NFL 2001 ..... **PAGE 70**
The stars on the next-gen Astroturf get rated.

28 PAGES OF UK LAUNCH TITLES REVIEWED
It all kicks off on pg62



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PSM2's first in-depth look at this RPG from the USA.

GRAN TURISMO 3 ..... PAGE 38
More pin sharp visuals from Sony's shiny new garage.

ZONE OF ENDERS ..... PAGE 28
We're playing Konami's killer mech title.

WIPEOUT FUSION ..... PAGE 44
New shots from the mercurial future-racer.

SSX ..... PAGE 110
We've ripped it apart to give you this definitive guide.

PAGE 54 PS2 FAQS
Don't know your SCARTs from your i-Links? Think that Hertz are a car rental firm? The big issues dealt with right here, right now.

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ON THE COVER

54 UK LAUNCH: HARDWARE
Sony's powerhouse is in your hands. We're on call to answer all those technical questions bound to arise as soon as you cop an eyeful of those five mysterious ports to the outside world.

64 UK LAUNCH: SOFTWARE
All the games available from day one played and reviewed just for you. PSM2's scores are the only ones that count.

16 TIMESPLITTERS!
A first-person shooter from the breakaway team responsible for *GoldenEye*? Worth a look then? Hell, YEAH...

64 READY 2 RUMBLE: ROUND 2
Your chance to whacko Jacko in this heavyweight sequel.

ISSUE #04
PS2'S UK LAUNCH...
It's a brave new world and PSM2 are here to give you the latest news, the best previews, the hottest tips plus the only reviews that matter. Flip those pages and get involved.

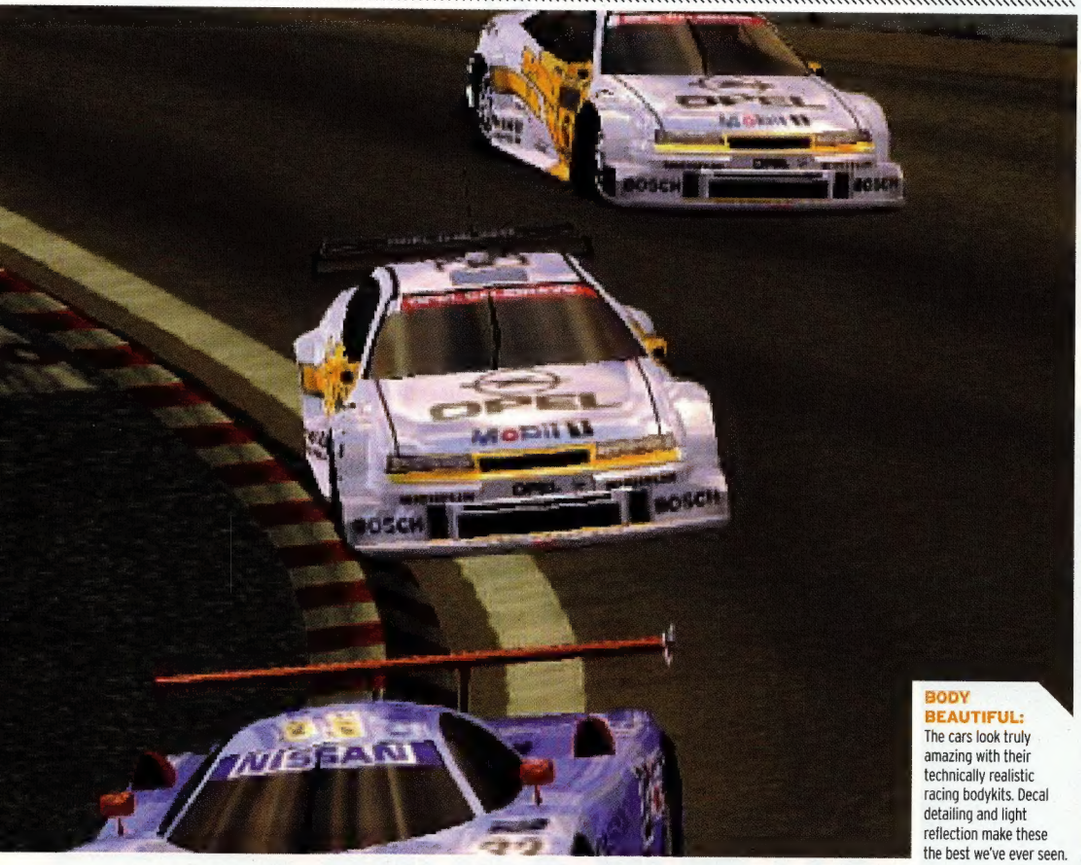
DEFINING MOMENT

THAT SPARK OF GENIUS THAT CAN ONLY BE PS2...

#04: SEEING THE DETAIL IN GRAN TURISMO 3

Every time this game appears, ripples of awe feed through the PSM2 team. The cars might not get damaged, but the rest of this hugely anticipated racer shows some truly stomach-churning attention to detail...

- **Name** Marcus Hawkins
- **Age** 28
- **Occupation** Editor, PSM2 Magazine
- **Why is this the Defining Moment of PlayStation 2 for you this month?**
  Seeing the beauty of *GT3* open up in a collection of brand new screenshots. We thought what we'd seen of the game so far was amazing, but these brand new images show a whole other level of detail in the car models. *This* is what PS2 gaming should all be about.
- **What other things have impressed you about PS2 so far?**
  Ignoring the grumbles that have come from the odd Ming-bearded developer, it's how certain R&D teams are just getting stuck in and working out the system's quirks to produce experiences unique to the towering console. Just look at the likes of *MGS2* and *The Getaway* to see what can be done when you *try*. **PSM2**



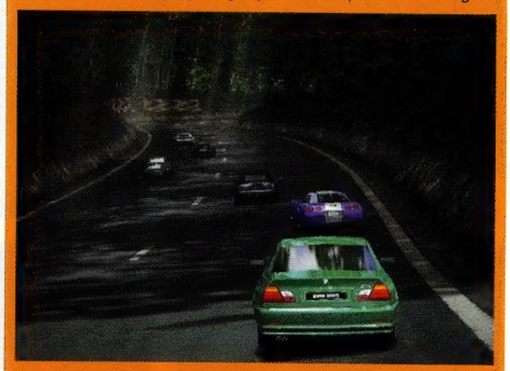
BODY BEAUTIFUL: The cars look truly amazing with their technically realistic racing bodykits. Decal detailing and light reflection make these the best we've ever seen.

"THESE BRAND NEW IMAGES SHOW A WHOLE OTHER LEVEL OF DETAIL IN THE CAR MODELS"

THE BIG PICTURE: The beautiful detail spreads from the cars to the incredibly scenic backgrounds.

KILLER SEQUENCE!

Trees, light and shadow. You'll never have believed the combination could be so potent in a videogame, but *Gran Turismo 3* proves that mixing the three with a generous assortment of sleek motors can make for compelling viewing. And it really does look as good in motion as it does in these amazing new screenshots we've got our hands on. You find your bottom jaw doing the old clichéd thing of hitting the floor when you come steaming out of a dark tunnel to be confronted with a sunlight-pierced canopy of trees, the light glinting of your car's bodywork. Astounding.



OVER TO YOU!

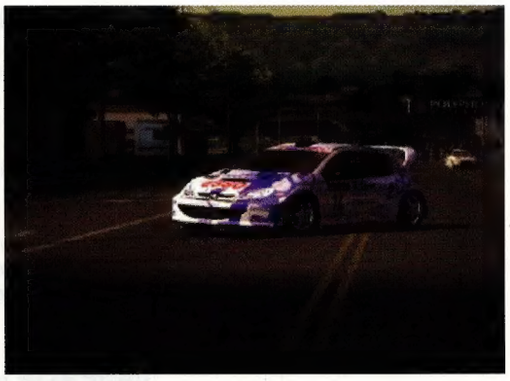
SHARE YOUR EXPERIENCES WITH PSM2

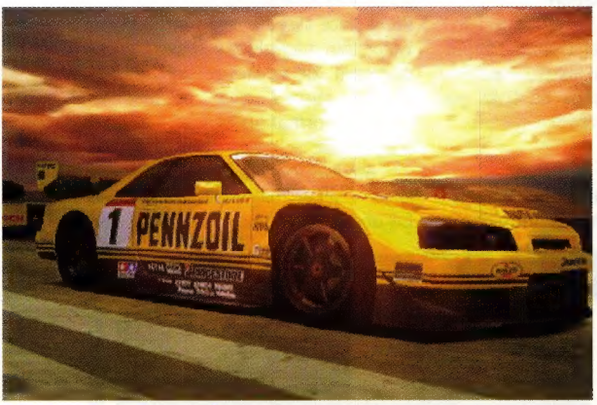
We'd like to hear what your PS2 Defining Moment is. Whether you've been lucky enough to get a Japanese system on import or you're waiting for the UK launch.

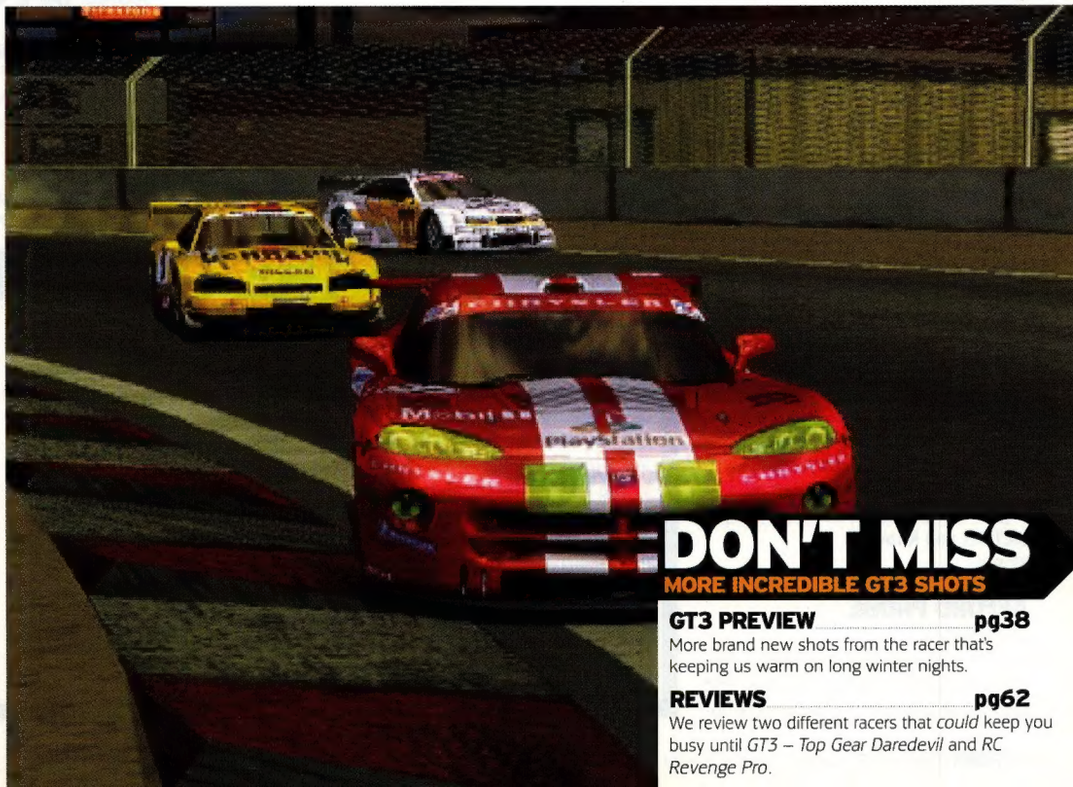
YOUR DEFINING MOMENT NEEDS TO:

■ Capture that 'PS2 feeling' ■ Be reasonably easy to illustrate

E-mail your Defining Moment to PSM2@FUTURENET.CO.UK, or write to Defining Moment, PSM2, Future Publishing, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath, BA1 2BW. Don't forget to attach a photograph of yourself...







DON'T MISS

MORE INCREDIBLE GT3 SHOTS

GT3 PREVIEW **pg38**

More brand new shots from the racer that's keeping us warm on long winter nights.

REVIEWS **pg62**

We review two different racers that *could* keep you busy until *GT3 – Top Gear Daredevil* and *RC Revenge Pro*.

LETTERS

THE LOUDEST VOICES IN THE PLAYSTATION 2 UNIVERSE

PSM2#03: The first great PS2 game.

STAR LETTER

"WHY DO DEVELOPERS SHOW US SUCH DISRESPECT?"

Dear PSM2,

I'm worried about the future of PSM2. I've just heard that *Munch's Oddysee* has been cancelled and will be developed exclusively for Xbox. Why do developers show us such disrespect? After all, the Emotion Engine may well be Sony's ultimate secret weapon...

Ruben Brouwer

Rotterdam, Netherlands

Lorne Lanning really believes that he's doing everyone a favour by switching to a Microsoft exclusive. He's signed a four game deal, through Infogrames, that'll see the future of the series well into 2005, with the re-ported version of *Munch's Oddysee* scheduled for Xbox's possible release in December 2001.

But, before everyone starts freaking out, let's put this in perspective. Lorne Lanning has been vocalising long and hard about the difficulties he and his team faced with PS2's architecture. Now, compare his attitude to Rob Francis, *WipEout Fusion's* lead designer, interviewed in PSM2#03. It's the difference between evolution and learning, or simply choosing to jump onto Bill Gate's new PC adventure. Which do you think swayed Lorne's decision... canning 18 months of development and porting over to another console for the love of mankind, or a long-term contract with Microsoft? Whether or not, as Lanning claims, there's no financial incentive for him personally, the shrewd move from his point of view has been made. Never trust a hippy. You can read Lorne Lanning's reaction to the Microsoft deal on www.oddworld.com – some of it's in song. Jeeesus.

This is your chance to air your views on the hot potato of the moment – we're mad keen to hear what you think about the PS2 launch line-up...

Write to:
Letters, PSM2, Future Publishing Ltd, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath BA1 2BW

NO THANKS FOR THE MEMORY

Dear PSM2

In your first issue you mentioned that PS2 won't be supplied with a 8MB Memory Card, yet P2 magazine says it will. I'm confused, which mag is correct?

Awnesh

Middlesex

Who d'ya think? Sony bundled the PS2 with a Memory Card in Japan purely because the data needed to configure the DVD was stored on it. As the data is stored within the software of the UK PS2, so there's no need for.the Memory Card. Sony take a slice of £27.49 and other magazines look like chumps. Everyone's a winner... except the consumer – on both counts.

WRITE TO PSM2 WITH: YOUR PS2 HOPES AND FEARS... YOUR THOUGHTS ON THE ISSUE... INTELLIGENT QUESTIONS...

CLOSE TO THE EDIT

Dear PSM2

Metal Gear Solid 2 is the most eagerly awaited PS2 games bar none, but how much is FMV and how much is in-game?

El Sloano,

Kilmarnock

Except for the stunning chopper intro, the rest of our demo was powered by the *MGS2* game engine. Hideo Kojima edited it personally, and switched camera views throughout the action to demonstrate the incredible potential of his latest baby. How much will actually appear in the finished game, as Kojima-san develops *MGS2*, is a different question all together – as soon as we find out, we'll let you know.

AFFORD PROBE

Dear PSM2

I'm 30-years-old and I've seen a few consoles come and go, so this PS2 bitching is just not on. The price a rip-off? I've got three kids, and taking them to the local zoo costs £70. Now that's a rip-off.

Kristian

Chester

RIGHT HEAR, RIGHT NOW

Dear PSM2

Because I'm hearing impaired, can you tell me if I'll be able to access DVD subtitles through third-party remote control pads?

Ashref Patel

Essex

Both of Joytech's DVD/CD remotes will have full subtitle access and subtitle buttons, as will Thrustmaster's remote, but Psytech's won't have a dedicated button.

ARCHIVE ASYLUM

Dear PSM2

can you tell me if it's possible to order back issues of PSM2?

Alex

Via e-mail

In response to the deluge of e-mails, letters and phone calls, we're making back issues available as from PSM2#05. Copies are scarce, so it'll be first come, first served.

ODD-SHAPED BALLS

Dear PSM2

Excellent mag! Finally a PS2 magazine available, and as a bonus it's bloody excellent. Quick question: have any Rugby Union or League games got any hope in the near future of making it onto PS2.

Daniel Ross

Sydney, Australia

Not that we know of Daniel, but keep an eye on Incoming for any news.

HOME TAPE-WORM

Dear PSM2

If PS2 has a Digital Optical Output, does this mean I'll be able to watch my favourite music videos on DVD and record at the same time?

Tom Bellamy

Dawlish

As long as you have the correct audio-out leads running through a suitable hi-fi or amplifier, then there's no reason why you can't make a perfectly legal, personal back-up, audio copy – for your use only – of your favourite tunes.

SURPRISE SURPRISE

Dear PSM2

I was expecting your mag to be a heavily biased, ridiculously optimistic-type rag. I knew of all the problems with the PS2's Japanese launch and the anti-aliasing, and for these reasons I was looking forward to how you avoided the situation, or gave terrible games sky-high scores.

My scepticism was blown out of the water as soon as I read the reviews pages. To my surprise, every game wasn't heralded as the greatest thing since sliced bread – I'm used to wafer-thin magazines with a complete disregard for whatever sinking ship they're aboard, that contain as much information as a Channel 5 newscast...

Anyway, back to the point of this letter – great magazine, jam-packed full of stuff (loved Bog Read), so, keep

CHANGE OF THE TIGHT BRIGADE

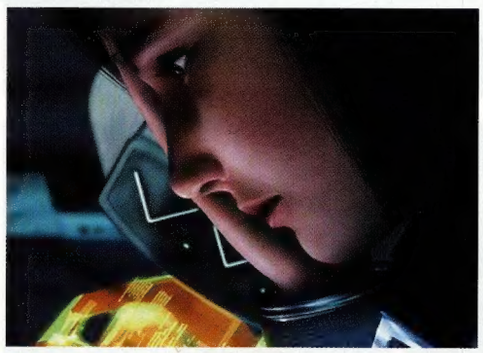
Dear PSM2,

Am I the only person to be concerned by the prospect of pay-as-you-play games? *Final Fantasy 7* kept me occupied for a good six months, now I hear we'll have to shell-out £10 a month for the pleasure of playing *FF11* as well as £10 for the game itself.

John

Via e-mail

The on-line Broadband situation's some way off being finalised, but the question of paying to play is an interesting one. While there's huge opportunity for money-making, both by Sony and Publishers, there's also the opportunity for an infinitely wider world of gaming. No-one's sure about the range of charges, but the important thing to remember is that it's a matter of choice – there's no gun to your head, and if consumers aren't prepared to meet exorbitant rates, then Sony will soon have to rethink their strategy. We'll keep you up-to-date, so expect an in-depth feature soon.



DIAL-A-GAME: How much *are* we going to have to pay for the privilege of spending 35 hours in highly complex game environments?

E-MAIL: PSM2@FUTURENET.CO.UK
WRITE TO: LETTERS, PSM2, FUTURE PUBLISHING LTD, 30 MONMOUTH ST, BATH BA1 2BW

up the good work.
Chris Gower
Via e-mail

DANGER USB
Dear PSM2
The first-person shoot-em-ups that are due to be released, all of which look excellent, don't seem to utilise the USB port on PS2 for the use of a keyboard and mouse. Do you think that programmers make use of the ports to get the full potential out of a game's controls?
James Miles
Wiltshire

Unreal Tournament on PS2 will utilise the USB ports for keyboard and mouse, whereas *TimeSplitters* won't. Don't be caught out – rush immediately to our FAQ feature on pg54, where we'll endeavour to answer all your technical questions in depth.

RPGENIUS
Dear PSM2
I've read the first two issues of PSM2 cover-to-cover, and found them smartly written, entertaining and informative. The feature on racers in PSM2#02 was great, but how about something similar for RPG's?
Simon Haywood
Via e-mail

Developers are holding back on the RPG front at the moment and, from what we've seen so far, this is no bad thing. As soon as they start rolling in, we'll set 'em up and, if we have to, knock 'em down.

COIFFING FIT
Dear PSM2
I was impressed to note in your preview of *The Bouncer* (PSM2#03) just how far character design has come. After all, it must have taken Tetsuya Nomura... oh, minutes to turn Zell from *Final Fantasy 8* into Kou Leifoh. Long hair, eh?
Iain Hingston
Via e-mail

SMASHING MOCKERY
Dear PSM2
I just love to see Sony make leaps and bounds. Darting above the rest, producing the ultimate console – everything about it sparkles. The graphics, DualShock 2, sheer processing power and to top it all off it's a DVD player. The perfect entertainment system, wouldn't you say? Oh, and one more thing, I think it's great that you don't slag off other systems.
Hayden
Via e-mail

We concentrate on the positives, guide you to the good times and lead you gingerly around the landmines of miscalculations and cock-ups. PSM2 doesn't have time to pour scorn on others.

THE BOUNCER: Cheeky use of *Final Fantasy* characters, or sinister plot.

DON'T WRITE TO PSM2 WITH: MY CONSOLE'S BETTER THAN YOUR CONSOLE ARGUMENTS... PLEASE D-O-N'-T!

UNREAL, REAL, REAL: It will be keyboard and mouse compatible.

HYPE DREAMS
Dear PSM2
The fact that Sony can't keep up with demand *is* annoying, but having been a videogame fan for over a decade I can vouch for the fact that the worst thing is buying a system that fails to find any support. Being stuck with a machine that developers won't touch with a barge pole is no fun – so look on the bright side.
Robin Whitbread
Via e-mail

Robin, you're safe. PSM2

All correspondence is assumed to be for publication unless marked otherwise. PSM2 reserve the right to edit readers' letters for length and clarity.

PLAYSTATION 2 MAGAZINE
PSM2

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PLAYSTATION 2 MAGAZINE
PSM2

GLOBAL

THE WIDE WIDE WORLD OF PLAYSTATION2

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JOHNNY CASH: An enthusiastic American gamer hands over five year's-worth of barbershop money.

EXTERNAL HARD DIVE: A surprising amount of homeless people were buying PS2s.

›AMERICAN PS2 LAUNCH フハワヌキニラ

USA LAUNCH MADNESS

The event brought out fans prepared to spend 16 hours on a cold pavement. It also tempted those with little regard for the law.

Doubters of Sony's UK pre-order system, repent now. Some of our American friends may have happily strolled off with a PS2 after a mere 16 hours of sleeping on a street, but others were swept up in a whirlwind of entrepreneurial high spirits, heartache and senseless violence. Customers at Sony's San Francisco-based Metreon grumbled quietly about the queue-jumpers, but at least they were treated to key-rings, ponchos and biscuits. Elsewhere, the mood was more ruthless. One teenager was robbed when leaving Best Buy in Gaithersburg, Montana – half an hour later, police found an 18-year-old trying to cover himself in pine needles across the street from the shop, just yards from a bag with the stolen PlayStation 2 in it. Other unscrupulous types were attracting bids of up to $1,600 on Internet auction site eBay.

It wasn't all bad, though – queue-camaraderie turned into a full-on street party in Houston. "A news crew brought hotdogs", enthused one shopper. Wahay!

PSM2 RECKONS *The first come, first served system in the USA meant that stores were forced to use tickets to organise their customers. Frankly, we're surprised it wasn't worse. This is a country where 29 percent of high school boys own at least one firearm.*

HAPPY DAYS: The carnival atmosphere even infected the hordes of journalists who descended on games shops.

RUMOURS

NEWS FROM THE PS2 UNDERGROUND

THERE'S NOTHING PSM2 LIKES BETTER than PVC-clad ladies. So it's with a merry smirk that we report that, yes, spy-spoof game *No One Lives Forever* is already slated for a film translation. And who, you ask yourself, would be good as Agent Cate Archer? Why, say our contacts, none other than Ms Liz Hurley, fresh from appearing as Vanessa Kensington in Austin Powers, then appearing in an Estee Lauder ad and nearly getting permanently banned from acting for being a scab.

RELIABILITY 5/10

PSM2 RECKONS *Well, she looks lovely in a catsuit, but we honestly can't see Liz Hurley carrying a film on her own. Her most bearable performances to date have been as an exploding robot (Austin Powers 2) and, erm, a 'model and sort of an actress' (EdTV). Couldn't have put it better ourselves...*

AS THE WORLD AWAITS ANNOUNCEMENTS about Sony's on-line strategy, our contacts within the company hint, in an extremely guarded way, that Sony's got 400 designers working on a site that is planned to cater to a 'staggering-if-it's-true' 40 percent of Internet users. This, of course, would put Sony a huge step further on the road to benevolent global domination.

RELIABILITY 4/10

PSM2 RECKONS *Sony are keeping their plans fairly quiet, but we wouldn't be surprised if their planning's this ambitious – after all, they're pushing the PS2 as an entertainment centre rather than a simple games machine, and their ads are already reaching out to markets that wouldn't have looked at a console before.*

WITH VOICE-RECOGNITION FINALLY developing to the extent where it actually *works*, software companies are jumping on the bandwagon with their usual panache. The latest murmured idea we've heard is that popular dating-simulator Tokimeki Memorial may make use of the technology in its latest instalment, by responding to the way you talk to it. Just like a real live girl.

RELIABILITY 2/10

PSM2 RECKONS *To be honest, we can't see this happening. Anyway, you'd be hard-pressed to take advantage of it in the UK – the Tokimeki games only ever come over here as imports, so you'd have to learn Japanese before you could start whispering sweet nothings into a polygon lady's ear.*

COMPLETED TIMESPLITTERS YET? Of course not – you aren't as good at games as us and, of course, you might not actually have bought it yet, in which case you probably should. Anyway, once you do, you'll no doubt be wondering about the significance of the end sequence, which simply states, "TimeSplitters will return". Have the Free Radical boys already got a sequel in the pipeline?

RELIABILITY 6/10

PSM2 RECKONS *David Doak, Director of Free Radical, confirmed our suspicions "Basically, at the end of GoldenEye it said 'Bond will return', and it's a good teaser so we borrowed it from GoldenEye. It seemed to be suitable, but doesn't necessarily mean a sequels in the works." Having said all that, a sequel's almost inevitable if the game does as well as it deserves.*

WITH THE DISTURBING ANNOUNCEMENT that Sony are soon to release *Space Venus*, based on the enormous J-pop girl group Morning Musume – at last count, there were ten of them – come whisperings of a worrying new trend. The game actually started life without the group's involvement, based on 360° real-time technology allowing camera control over pre-shot footage. We're already hearing rumours of the technology being transferred to the UK. Lead contender for the treatment can only be – whisper it – Steps.

RELIABILITY 3/10

PSM2 RECKONS *Remember the Spice World game on PSone? We've been doing nothing but trying to forget it. Anyway, this 'real-time camera technology' is supposedly based on the power of PS2, but sounds suspiciously like a feature we've seen on any number of music DVDs. Anyway, if you've got nothing better to do, and you're able to summon a passing interest in Morning Musume, get on over to: www.sonymusic.co.jp/VisualStore/SpaceVenus/*

ONE EXCITABLE LETTER WE'VE recently received told us that *Toejam and Earl*, that little-and-large combo of alien surf bums, was 'definitely' coming to the PS2. Our spirits leapt. Temporarily.

RELIABILITY 0/10

PSM2 RECKONS *We contacted the makers of Toejam and Earl, who have some distressing news. "Basically, it's never going to happen." Oh.*

Pictorial Press

EYE WITNESS: But won't you trip over pot plants and things when you make a cup of tea?

›PERIPHERAL NEWS フバラヌ

HEAD GEAR

TVs are for wimps. Get yourself the latest in interactive, virtual kit from Olympus.

Ever since the Japanese launch of PS2, we've been eagerly waiting for some unwieldy kit to strap to our heads, and now our prayers have been answered. First up's the Olympus Eyetrek FMD-20P, a PS2-only 'virtual big-screen' concealed in a pair of Cyclops-style shades. Weighing in at a mere 85 grams, it shouldn't induce horrendous neck injuries, but with a ¥50,000 price tag, we're not really tempted. More exciting is Taito's Speech Recognition Controller, which comes with a detachable mic/headphones and will be bundled with *Greatest Striker* for a piffling ¥4,900, allowing you to yell at your team. And, hopefully, the ref.

PSM2 RECKONS *[illegible]*

MIC CONTROLLER: We're looking forward to debating and auctioneering sims.

EYE-GEAR SANCTION: We're interested in how you'll look as you play behind your shades.

"AS SOON AS I GET IT, I'M GOING TO TAKE A DIGITAL PICTURE OF IT, PUT IT ON EBAY AND GIVE IT A $500 STARTING BID"

ALLEN MICHALIK PS2 CUSTOMER

If you live in Dallas, hunt Allen Michalik through the streets with sharpened sticks. Expect a similar rash of ruthless profiteering in the UK before Christmas.

›UK TECHNOLOGY NEWS シラモカ

SPOT THE DIFFERENCE

Take a moment to admire the sleek design of the UK PS2. Where the Japanese unit has a PC-card-style expansion slot, the Western version's got an expansion bay about the size of a Dean R. Koontz paperback. This should happily accommodate forthcoming hard drive/broadband add-ons, eliminating the need for huge, clunky connections.

PSM2 RECKONS *Good thing too. We really don't want our office any more cluttered.*

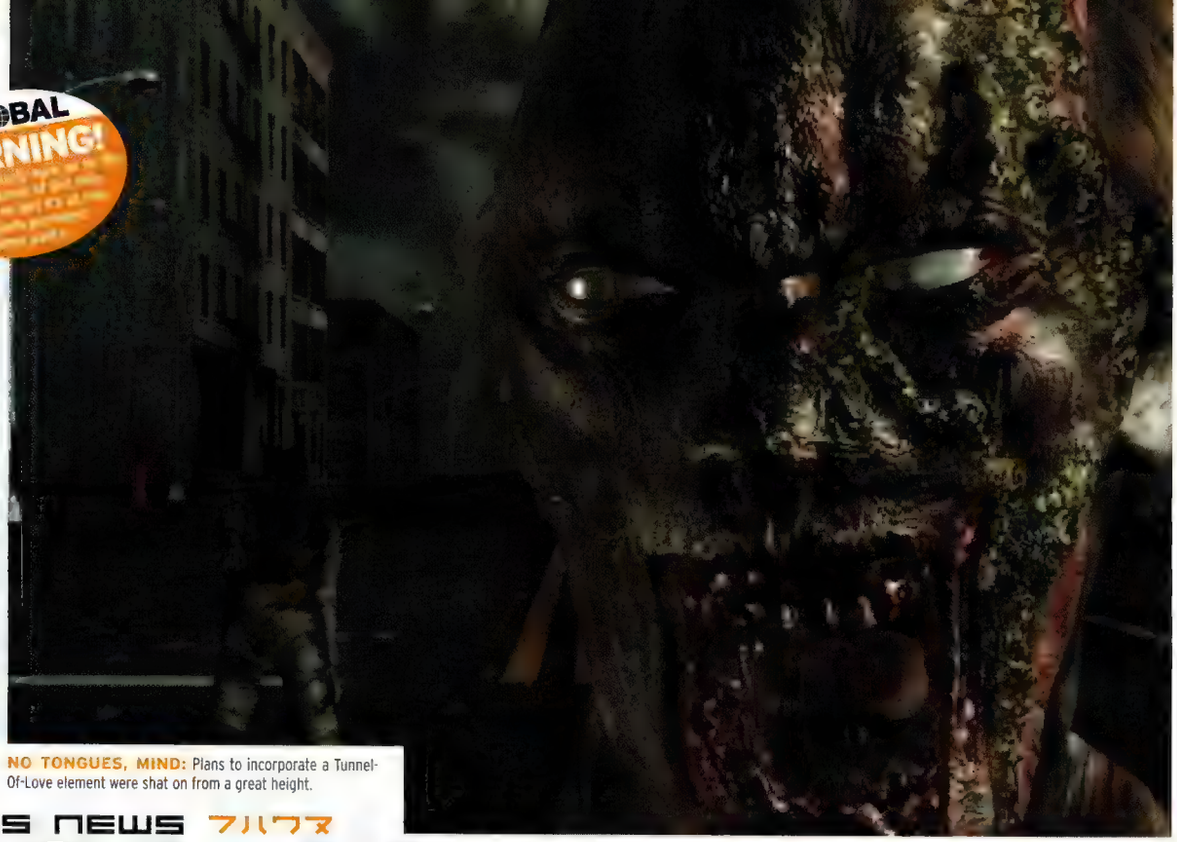
BAY, WATCH: On the surface of it, the PS2's rear is as smooth as ever...

DOCK OF THE BAY: But reveals an aperture big enough to fit a hamster in. No, don't.

GLOBAL WARNING!

ALONE IN THE DARK: Take a mate with you. Preferably a feisty SWAT-team member.

DECOMPOSE YOURSELF: We've seen more freakish abominations of science in Disneyland.



NO TONGUES, MIND: Plans to incorporate a Tunnel-Of-Love element were shat on from a great height.

›JAPANESE NEWS NEWS ﾆｭｰｽ

RIDING HAZARD

Can't wait for *Resi 4*? Scare yourself witless with Capcom's updated version of the time-honoured ghost train. Just don't take the kids.

Capcom fuelled the already feverish speculation about *Resident Evil* PS2 last month when they showcased a short film merrily titled Bio Hazard 4D: Executer. As you'll have noticed, it's very much along the *Resi* theme, with horrible mutant creatures and poor doomed soldiers aplenty. However, Capcom have recently confirmed that it'll actually be an amusement park ride. We're not exactly sure what form it'll take yet, but the most likely one seems to be the kind of jiggly-seat fun popularised by rides like the Universal Studios Tour, backed with shouty members of staff in zombie outfits. Not one to take elderly and infirm relatives on, we suspect.

PSM2 RECKONS *We'd like to say we're eagerly awaiting the [illegible] but we're not [illegible] of course.*

TAKE ME HIGHER: And we're not sure how the complaints department'll work.

›USA NEWS ﾆｭｰｽ

SONY EXPLAINS USA SHORTAGE

With the media gently nudging harassed parents everywhere into a frenzy of righteous indignation, Sony have refuted rumours that they deliberately engineered the US shortage of PS2s. The theory being that Sony deliberately chose to see their profits drop in order to create a feeding frenzy. The company would then gradually release machines over the Christmas period to keep PS2 at the front of everyone's minds. There may be a grain of truth in the last part, but you may remember that last issue, we speculated that the blame was more likely to lie with a shortage of chips, probably related to the machine's DVD capabilities. Well, we were almost right. The problem was to do with the Graphics Synthesiser chips that are an integral part of the PS2's architecture. Sony attempted to move production of these from Kobuku to a larger plant in Nagasaki, but problems in the latter meant that the move had to be reversed. This reduced the number of units they could hope to produce to a mere 500,000, but worse still, it delayed them so much that Sony had to air-lift them to the US simply to get them in shops for October 26th. All that expense, and yet they still get vilified by the press.

PSM2 RECKONS *Fair enough. But why didn't they tell us in the first place, and save themselves a lot of hassle?*

INACTION STATIONS: After spending his life-savings, Mike finally had enough PS2s to make a sofa.

›PERIP ﾍﾟﾘﾌ

SMART CARDS

Joytech have unveiled the Smart Card. Using an adaptor, it's compatible with the PSone and PS2, the same size as a credit card, and holds 1MB of game data. To be honest, it's not *that* much smaller than a proper Memory Card, but our sister mag Power's offering a free cover-mounted adaptor plus two half-price vouchers for the cards.

BYTESIZE

› **JAPAN:** Titles continue to be announced for Sony's PS2-compatible Cybershot digital camera. Sun Electronics' *Enjoy Magic* is the latest, but the most exciting is Enterbrain's Tsukurou, which will let you scan your face into games.

› **JAPAN: Sony Tokyo quietly announced that profits were the second fiscal quarter were down 57.4 percent. They've attributed the disturbing drop to a strong Yen and rising operation costs associated with PlayStation 2.**

› **USA:** Since the announcement of the PS2 shortage, Sega have tried to capitalise on the troublesome launch by printing a billboard commiserating Sony, accompanied by a photo of a gurning child. That'll help their cool image.

› **USA: According to dailyradar.com, the US launch saw "an incredible number of people asking one another what games to buy." And we thought the games were the whole point of queuing for upwards of a day.**

› **JAPAN:** Sony have announced the shipment of 3.52 million PS2s by the end of September 2000. Assuming they've all been sold, that's about one in ten people among the male adult population playing *Primal Image*.

› **JAPAN: Sony and Toyota have announced plans to set up PS2 experience booths in auto-shops across Japan, as part of the promotional drive for *GT3*. Sony intend to extend the scheme to train stations.**

› **JAPAN:** Square have announced that 'popular' American R 'n' B singer Shanice Wilson, famed for songs like the bleak, depressing *I Love Your Smile* will be providing the vocals on *The Bouncer's* theme, *Love is the Gift*.

GLOBAL NETWORK

WORD FROM OUR CONTACTS ON THAT THERE WEB T'ING...

Normally in Global Network we consult the brains of our contacts on the web, expecting nothing more than sober and well-reasoned opinion from those best acquainted with the industry. This month, though, we've decided to get into the spirit of things and succumb to launch hysteria, by printing some of the most downright lunatic comments we've heard.

"I'LL BUY MORE THAN ONE AND SELL THEM. I TOOK ECONOMICS!"
Frank Escobedo, electrical engineering major. An evil, evil man.

"THEY DIDN'T ROB AN ADULT. THEY ROBBED THE HOPES AND DREAMS OF A CHILD"
The mother of a 12-year-old who, when robbed, ran after two baseball-bat-wielding men. Johnny, don't be a hero.

"A RAIN CHECK UNDER THE TREE DOESN'T GO TOO FAR"
Comments Sega America President Peter Moore. WHAT?

"THEY WERE PRETTY UGLY THIS MORNING... IT WAS MOSTLY GROWN UPS, THAT'S THE SAD PART"
Anonymous Wal-Mart Store Manager.

"NO LINE-UP, NO CROWD... LIVING IN A TOWN IN THE NORTH OF QUEBEC IS NOT BAD"
Canadian Francois Legualt. Presumably he's hated it every other day of his life.

"YOU DON'T THINK ABOUT JEOPARDISING YOUR LIFE TO GET A SILLY PLAYSTATION"
Another robbery victim, clearly underestimating some people's strength of feeling

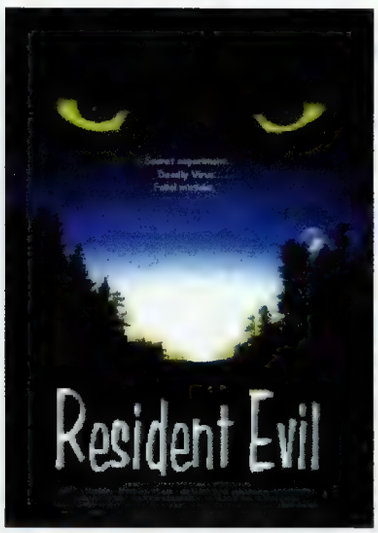
"A MAN TRYING TO RETURN TO HIS PLACE IN LINE WAS SUBJECTED TO HECKLING AND SHOUTING"
The Washington Post makes the most of an outbreak of rudeness.

LET'S GO GLOBAL...

Hear more from these guys at:

- *www.bbc.com*
- *www.washingtonpost.com*
- *news.yahoo.com*

HALLS OF RESIDENCE: The setting's based on the first game, rather than the city-wide craziness of the second.



STARE CASE: Early fan posters on the Internet were, unsurprisingly, rubbish.

SEE NO EVIL: Honestly, would this convince you to see the film of *RE*?

›US FILM NEWS フハワヌ

EVIL NEWS

After *Tomb Raider*, comes news that the much talked about *RE* movie might actually happen.

Following rumours last month, it's now been confirmed that shoddy-video-game-adaptation veteran Paul Anderson (no, not the one who did Boogie Nights) will indeed be directing the forthcoming *Resident Evil* film. After initial drafts by zombie-meister George Romero, Capcom have also turned to Anderson to write the script. In terms of casting, we've heard rumours ranging from Christopher Walken to Dolph Lungren for Wesker alone, but it's finally transpired that the call's still out and, worryingly, none of the roles available seem to have anything to do with the book. So if any aspiring actors out their fancy their chances as 'athletic amnesiac' Alice, 'tough commando gal' Rain, or 'tough commando guy' JD, for Christ's sake don't call us.

PSM2 RECKONS *If you had the choice would you have picked Sheena Easton or The Beast... the Sean Bean? Seriously?*

›TECHNOLOGY NEWS シフヨカ

COMPUTER OR CONSOLE

In an effort to lower the cost of the machine, Sony are attempting to have the PS2 reclassified as a personal computer. Currently, the PS2 is classified as a games machine, which exposes it to a 2.2 percent tariff.

In the face of claims from tariff authorities that the PS2 doesn't significantly differ from the PSone, Sony are prepared to appeal. "We believe it is a computer entertainment system that functions as a computer because it has a 128bit microprocessor, a DVD player and the potential to connect to the Internet", said an SCE spokesman, "we may consider appealing to an international organisation, possibly the World Trade Organisation, although that is a long way ahead."

PSM2 RECKONS *Well, it's certainly powerful enough, but how many of you are actually intending to get USB keyboards and mice? Still, PSM2 seems to remember attempts to classify PS2 as a potential missile-guiding supercomputer a while ago, so trying to say it's basically the same as the PSone are clearly ridiculous.*

DREAM MACHINE: It's not a computer until you can look up porn on it, say officials. Maybe.

› **JAPAN:** *Lake Masters EX* **is the latest instalment in Dazu's popular series, and will be compatible with Sony's Popegg printer. Catch a virtual fish, take a virtual picture and print it out so you can boast about it.**

› **JAPAN:** Famitsu, Japan's biggest games mag, has awarded *SSX* a storming 32/40, based on their four-people-giving-marks-out-of-ten scoring system. That earns it the Famitsu Gold, and is the highest mark they've given an EA game.

› **JAPAN: KOEI are offering one member of their fanclub the opportunity to have their face scanned and used in *Kessen 2* as one of the characters. Visit their website at www.gamecity.ne.jp for details.**

› **JAPAN:** The latest edition to the *Choro Q* series of racers includes a plethora of goodies along with the penny-racing action. The special box set contains a mini Lancer Revolution III, and Race Queen Jenny, all for ¥10,000.

MINI-MAG COMPO!

› **Long-term devotees of PSM2 may remember us running a competition to win a tidy bundle of goodies to go with your smart new PS2. So, finally, we're happy to announce that the following all get *Tekken Tag*, *Ridge 5*, *Fantavision*, *F1 2000* and a Memory Card, and one lucky blighter strolls off with a MultiTap 2 and four DualShock 2's as well. All the winners have been notified.**

THE WINNER IS...

JACKIE PITT, EAST RIDING

AND THE RUNNERS UP ARE...

SAMUEL JENNINGS, Somerset
MATT COLLETT, Wiltshire
CHRISTOPHER BELL, Fife
SAM TURNER, Hampshire
K ALMAND, Middlesex
CHRISTOPHER PEIRSE, Leeds
CHRIS MOREING, Warwickshire
PHILIP JONES, Kent
BW CHAPMAN, West Midlands
SCOTT TAILFORD, Northumberland

START
FINISH

STUNT GP
PC CD
PlayStation 2
TEAM 17

GAME OF THE MONTH

PSM2 TAKES APART A PREMIER PLAYSTATION 2 TITLE FOR YOUR EXCLUSI

PSM2 HEAD-TO-HEAD

OUT UK NOW

TIMESPLI

TIME TRAVELLING MALEVOLENT ENTITIES AND WELL-

TIMESPLITTERS

ARMED DUCKS? WHAT'S GOING ON?

It'll have you chuckling as you unleash your twin Uzis, but don't get hysterical *quite* yet...

REVIEWER: Joel Snape

There are games where you get so caught up in the excitement that it's near-impossible to avoid making the occasional barbed comment in the direction of a worthy adversary. There are games with mechanics shoddy enough to pry obscenities from a Blue Peter presenter. Then there're games that do both – ones that exhilarate and infuriate in such equal measure that you'll be left flinging non-stop obscenity at the screen until your neighbours put extra locks on the doors and your loved ones seriously consider exorcism. *TimeSplitters*, of course, is *exactly* like that.

It all starts so well, too. In keeping with Free Radical's idea of an updated *Doom*, the game's refreshingly free of any kind of rendered cut-scenes – from the start, it simply presents you with a menu screen, then it's straight into the action, which is, after all, what every game should be concentrating on. The in-game graphics are lovely. Some of the edges look a bit rough, but if you can get close to a Cyborg Stewardess without her peppering you with hollow-points, you'll be able to appreciate every detail of her finely sculpted face. White-hot bullets ping pleasingly off the scenery, and the backgrounds are incredibly atmospheric, if occasionally blocky. The controls are OK – the combinations of both Analogue sticks work well, and anyone who complains that they can't play without a mouse/*GoldenEye* setup is just whining for the sake of it. The auto-aim works almost *too* well, but we'll be getting to that in a second.

An impressive attention to detail in the animations and some excellent AI makes the enemies surprisingly lifelike – they'll duck bullets ricochet off the walls around them to duck behind crates aiming M-16s above their heads if you corner them. The death animations are even better – gangsters clutch the limbs you've shot them in, while wounded snipers tumble from buildings and cranes with stuntman panache. There are occasional slips – anyone who's seen *Dawn of the Dead* knows that zombies should just be shambling cannon fodder, but here they're usually just as vicious and accurate as anyone...

INSIGHT

- Player-created levels are saved in wireframe and weigh in at under one kilobyte – that's 1/8000th of a PS2 memory card.

INFO

- **CODE TESTED** PAL (UK)
- **DEVELOPER** Free Radical Design
- **PUBLISHER** Eidos
- **GAME TYPE** First-Person Shooter
- **PRICE** £44.99
- **EXTRAS** 1-4 Players, MultiTap 2, Memory Card

DETAILS

- Over 60 playable characters.
- 18 Arenas, nine in Story Mode.
- Level Editor.
- Story, Challenge and Arcade modes.
- Arcade features Escort, Bagtag, Capture the Bag, Knockout, Deathmatch,

VILLAGE PEOPLE: The townsfolk wouldn't seem out of place in a Hammer horror film.

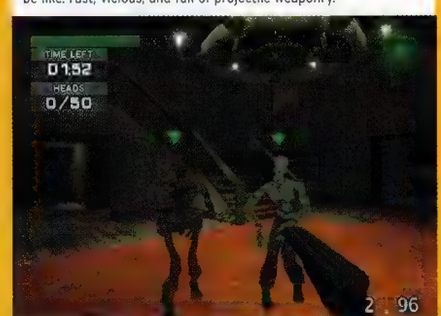
I HATE THAT DUCK

The Challenge mode single-handedly saves *TimeSplitters*' one-player appeal. Whether you're gunning down pistol-packing ducks or dodging vicious cyborgs while trying to protect a brain in a jar, it's good, violent fun, and it's only a shame that there isn't more of it.

LOBSTER RUN: Save the crustaceans from the zombie fishwives. Look, just don't ask.

FLOCK AROUND THE CLOCK: Duck hunting, except with armed ducks. Compulsively playable, shockingly hard.

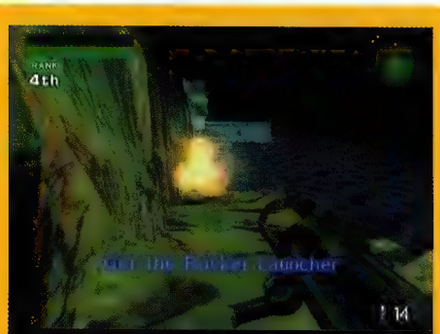
IF I ONLY HAD A BRAIN: This is what Robot Wars should be like. Fast, vicious, and full of projectile weaponry.



BEHEAD THE UNDEAD: A frenzy of decapitation. But don't let them near you – they're supernaturally hard.

GAME OF THE MONTH

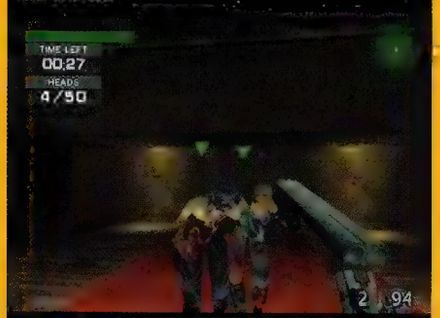
PSM2 TAKES APART A PREMIER PLAYSTATION 2 TITLE FOR YOUR EXCLUSIVE PLEASURE...



MOTOR LAUNCH: Rocket launchers can fire up to three missiles at once. Handy for those crowded areas.

AUTORIFLES AT DAWN...

The choice of weaponry on offer's excellent – there's everything from archaic blunderbusses and fizzing sticks of TNT, to triple-barrelled rocket launchers and ricochet-firing sci-fi pistols. Shell cases eject, miniguns spin and the shotgun breaks open in a manner happily reminiscent of the Evil Dead films. But we'd still like them to be a bit more well-balanced.



CLUNK, CLICK: The shotgun's very satisfying to reload, but completely hopeless at long range.

THE WHOLE NINE MILLIMETRES: The Uzi – as popularised by Terminators, and John Woo villains.

WHAT'S SO MINI ABOUT IT? Spray unstoppable death at all before you with twin miniguns. Until you're shot in the back.

▶else. Others seem even more frighteningly intelligent – it's initially possible to sneak up on patrolling SWAT team members in the Dockland level, but after a while they're circling around behind you while you're covering a certain door.

This is all excellent, and certainly raises the challenge – you can't always rely on enemies to simply blunder into your sights. It makes things viciously hard, but only the most caddish sort of bad loser could possibly complain that the enemies are too lifelike. Other aspects of the intelligence, however, are notably less forgiving. Even on the easiest level, the bad guys can spot you from about half-a-mile away and tend to be unerringly accurate, which makes the sniper rifle completely redundant. In fact, there's a disconcerting James-Bond-credits-in-reverse moment, as you're carefully lining up on a distant antagonist, *just* about to squeeze the gun's trigger... when he spins around and lets you have it with both barrels. It's unfair, but then you realise that your pistol does exactly the same thing as long as it's pointing in vaguely the right direction, which somehow makes things even worse.

INSIGHT

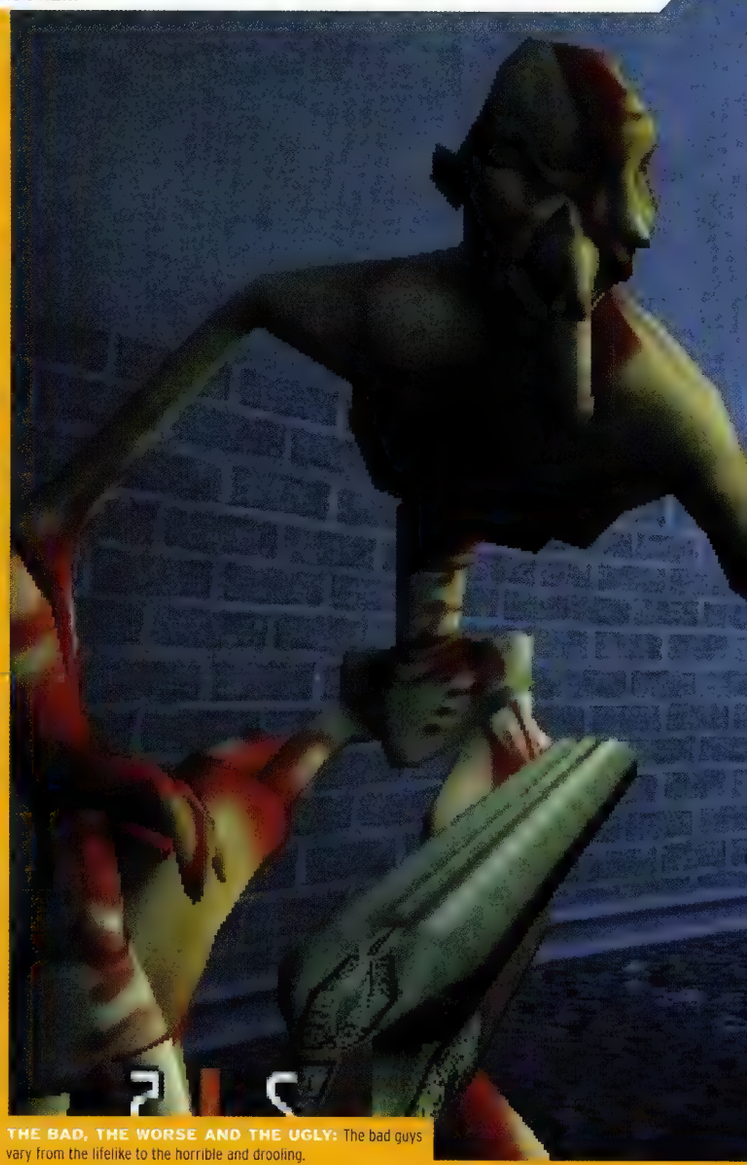
The best hidden character we've uncovered in Challenge mode is Robofish – a goldfish-bowl robot. He's also about the same height as Oddjob, so expect complaints if you pick him.

OBJET D'ARK

All of the above, of course, make the single-player game fearsomely difficult and more than a bit frustrating. But since it's little more than a way of unlocking new levels and characters, that isn't too important. The Story mode, for instance is nothing of the sort – the plot's something to do with time travel, but don't worry about it too much. The aim of every level is the same – retrieve an object (perhaps a briefcase, an Egyptian artefact or a brain in a jar), and escape with it. On the way in, you're confronted by level-specific nasties, but grabbing the object will alert the TimeSplitters, who turn out to be slimy, heavy-breathing beings who teleport in to thwart your grave-robbing misdeeds.

It sounds stupid, but it makes for an entertainingly two-tiered game – the first half's all caution and systematic bad-guy strafing, but the dash back to the exit past gurgling 'Splitters is more like a frantic bid for survival. Fun enough for a while, but you certainly wouldn't want an entire game's worth of shooting, running and collecting things, which is why completing the Story mode's half-dozen levels unlocks the compelling Challenge stages. Ace.

Your (more than) typical challenge runs like this: rival gangs of sushi chefs and mutant fishwives are tearing a peaceful Cornish village apart with gunfire in a bid to grab the most lobsters from the pier. You simply have to save your crustacean friends and mow everyone else down with a belt-fed minigun. Strangely, this is *fantastic* – while it's still appallingly difficult, the variety provided by the challenges is a welcome change from just shooting things. So, with the single-player mode just about salvaged, it's on to the joys of multi-player carnage.



THE BAD, THE WORSE AND THE UGLY: The bad guys vary from the lifelike to the horrible and drooling.

SPICE UP YER LIFE

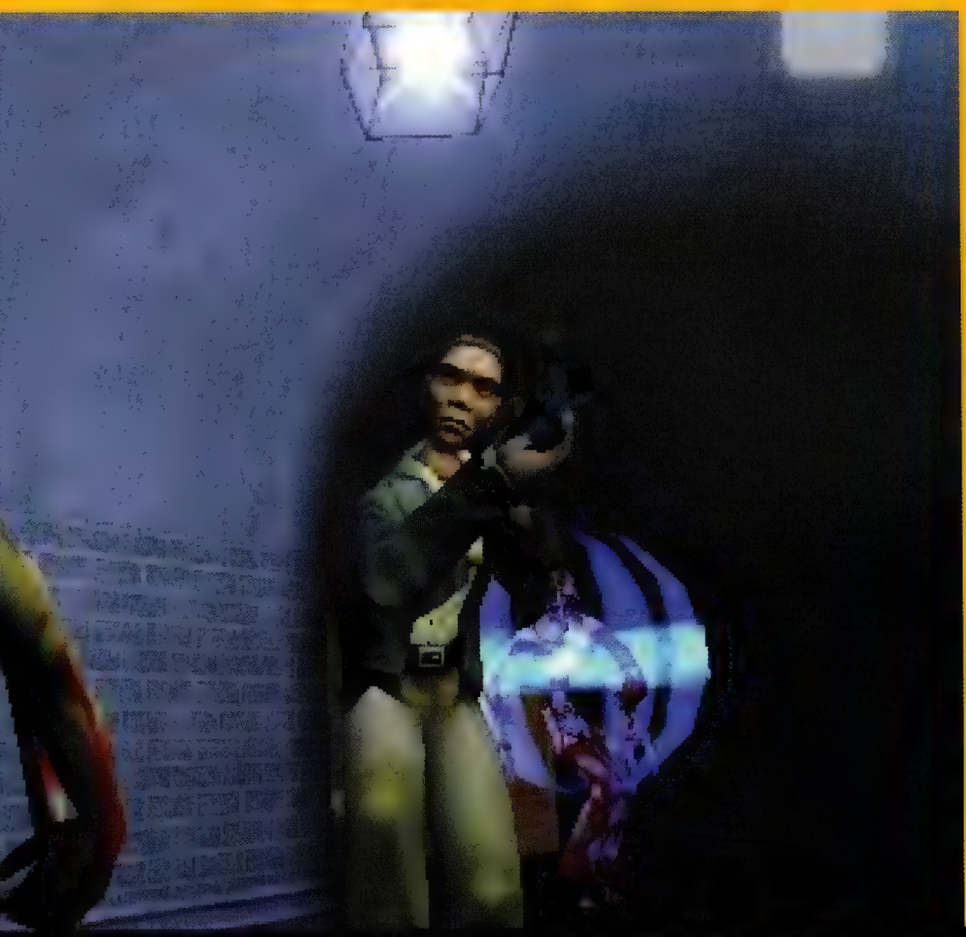
Arcade mode boasts a distracting array of options – the entire weapon set can be customised, and 'bots can be added to spice things up. There're also a wealth of game modes aside from the standard Deathmatch – the terrible Last Stand (stay in one place, shoot people), the uninspiring Capture the Bag, the cerebrally tactical Escort and the frenetic, tremendous Knockout and Bagtag.

Commendably, the speed stays at 60fps even with four players and a posse of 'bots scampering about, so the action barely gives you space to breathe – get distracted for a second, and you'll catch a bullet in the lungs. It's frantic fun and not too mentally taxing, making it perfect for late night sessions. The constant loading and saving of player preferences is a bit intrusive, but it's a necessity too, so we can't complain about that. The only real problem is that some of the skill associated with Deathmatches seems to be a bit lacking. The auto-aiming makes it so easy to hit each other, that the person with the biggest gun wins – even the most ham-mitted social inadequate can run amok with a double minigun.

Then there are the little things. Some are so seemingly insignificant that it seems almost▶

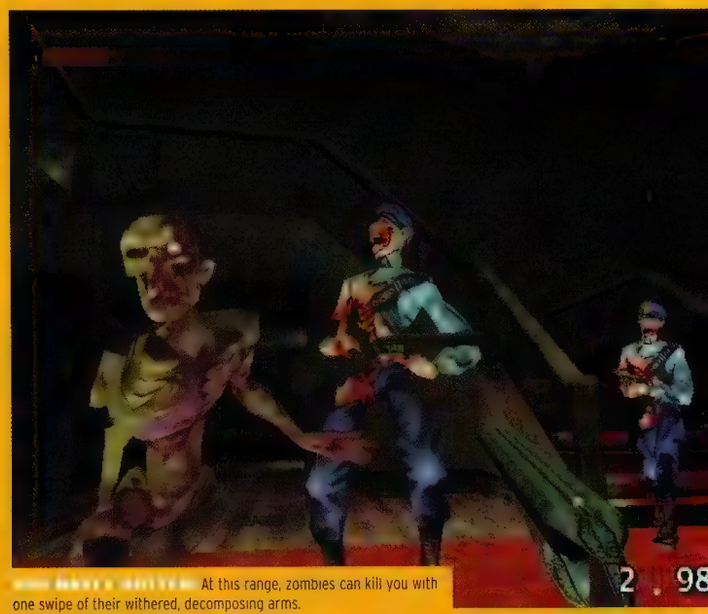
IMPACT POINT

Bagtag. The idea is simple – hold onto the briefcase for the longest before the time limit runs out. But, like all simple ideas, it quickly degenerates into an orgy of violence until someone ends up huddled in a toilet, defending the bag from an unstoppable barrage of Uzi-toting cyborgs. Genius.



BANANAS 'SPLITS The 'Splitters hiss like crazy people. It's really quite disturbing.

TIMES SQUARE Open areas usually end up swamped with era-hopping nasties.



[illegible] At this range, zombies can kill you with one swipe of their withered, decomposing arms.

"IT'S VICIOUSLY HARD, BUT ONLY THE MOST CADDISH SORT OF BAD LOSER COULD POSSIBLY COMPLAIN THAT THE ENEMIES ARE TOO LIFELIKE"

TimeSplitters' enemy AI takes no prisoners, and brings games to bloodily abrupt endings.

GETTING INTO CHARACTER

If you always wanted to see Starsky and Hutch take on Don Corleone, *TimeSplitters'* vast range of retro-comedy characters is the closest you're going to get. Each one breaks into a daft little animation when you pick them, and as well as the cool bloke/pretty bird combo from each of Story mode's levels, it's possible to play as every 'bot in the game.

FINGERS MCKENZIE

JACQUES MISERE

DET HARRY TRIPPER

OLGA STROM

LADY JAYNE

DEACON SWAINE

LT CHRISTINE MALONE

PEEKABOO JONES

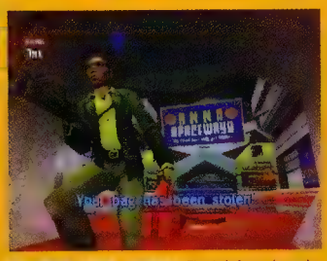
DR KATIE NADIR

IN THE MODE

Escort mode works nicely – the idea is to protect a defenceless, but purposefully striding, man from the other team's assassins. Co-operative Story mode's not tactical enough to be worth playing, and Capture the Flag's the same as it always is. Stick to shooting each other. Or playing the magnificent Bagtag.

BAG IT UP Try shooting bag-carriers in the back – they're invariably fleeing for their lives.

DUMB PASS The people you're escorting are frighteningly stupid at times.



[illegible] The briefcase is a nice Pulp Fiction-style touch.

[illegible] Is it us, or is co-operative play just a little bit wussy? You wanna shoot each other...

GAME OF THE MONTH

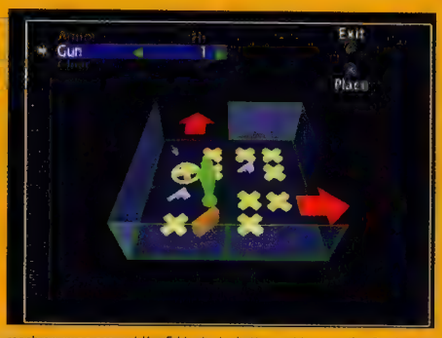
PSM2 TAKES APART A PREMIER PLAYSTATION 2 TITLE FOR YOUR EXCLUSIVE PLEASURE...

MAPPING IT OUT

The map-making Level Editor is simple, intuitive and fast to use – like Sticklebricks compared to the PC equivalent's Technic Lego. Fine when you want a quick blast, but how does it work when you want to recreate the sweaty, gun-toting atmosphere of, say, the PSM2 office? Here's where you find out...

STEP 1: FLOOR PLANNING

First, we put in a stairway as a point of reference. This works fine. The room shapes on offer are reasonably varied, although our office plan's quite blocky, and doesn't have any open-plan, balconied shooting galleries in it.



STEP 2: OBJECT LESSONS

Now it's time to add weapons, start points and medi-packs. We pile up the machine guns around the Editor's desk, then add a bag (for Bagtag) in the Publisher's office. Unfortunately, there aren't any scenic accessories like desks or pillars, which is a shame.

STEP 3: LIGHTING

The lighting's excellent - have it in any colour you want, or perhaps make it pulse and strobe. Here we add a flickery striplight to our area, and a red one for the stairs, to symbolise the hellish descent to the kitchen. There. Finished.

OUR LEVEL BEST

So here we are. Does this look like our office? Um... no. To stop the arenas looking bare, the game adds its own bits of scenery - knee-high walls, bits of rubble, that sort of thing - but they don't show up in the Level Editor, which makes everything a bit random.

THEME PARK

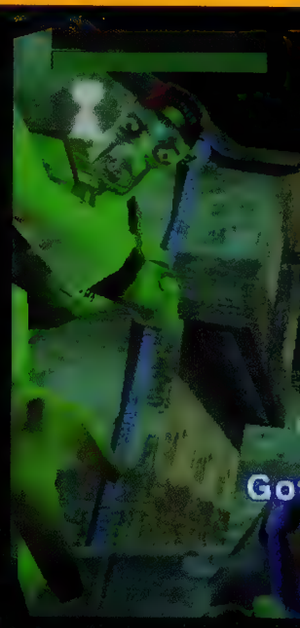
The choice of texture sets is a bit restrictive, too - this is the same level, but with the 'Spaceport' theme rather than the 'Industrial' one. So, the Level Editor - fine if you want to bash out a general level, hopeless if you want to gun down your colleagues in recognisable settings.

"EVEN THE MOST HAM-MITTED SOCIAL INADEQUATE CAN RUN AMOK WITH A DOUBLE MINIGUN"

SPLITSVILLE: Having bad guys materialise on every side certainly keeps you on your toes.

JUST THE TWO OF US: Add bots to spice up otherwise lonely deathmatches. You can vary each one's intelligence, too.

EVIL, DEAD: Considering their hollow eye sockets, they're very good shots. We don't know where they got the tommy guns from.



▶spiteful to include them here, but trust us, play for a while, and they're all you'll think about. Get shot in a Deathmatch, for example, and your screen flashes 'Killed by Tuxedo Cyborg' – but when *you* kill someone it doesn't tell you. This means you're often reduced to squinting into the distance to work out whether he fell over or ran off, and you're almost always denied the pleasure of knowing you shot the player that owes you a tenner. The D-pad weapon selection system means you can't switch guns while moving, which will get you killed at least a couple of times. A better close-combat weapon than the default John-Wayne-haymaker might have been nice.

Some bits just don't look *finished* – the health and armour indicators are just murky little bars that you'll barely notice at the top of the screen, and the game never bothers to tell you if you've picked up a medi-pack. Not exactly infuriating, but a mild frustration all the same.

'TAP INTO THE SAUCE

So, should you buy *TimeSplitters* on launch day? If you've got three friends and you're prepared to shell-out a bit of extra cash on a MultiTap – yes. Otherwise: maybe. It's a game you mess about with rather than play through, and while there's lots to do, the entertainment on offer's hit and miss. Not the triumph it could have been, then, but the gaming equivalent of a Paul Verhoeven film – sometimes appaling, sometimes amazing, usually fairly violent and never, *ever* boring. PSM2

SCARAMANGA'S CHOICE

1 **TIMESPLITTERS**
A toybox-worth of options, and graphically far superior to any other console first-person shooter. You'll mess about with it for ages.

2 **QUAKE 2**
Neglected on the PSone, but still an excellent game, if a bit murky.

3 **DUKE NUKEM 3D**
Entirely reliant on women in skimpy outfits, masking some violent action.

PSM2 VERDICT

GAMEPLAY
+ Sends you into a roaring bloodlust.
- ...but, occasionally, in real life too.

GRAPHICS
+ Crisp. Nice attention to detail.
- A bit dark at times.

SOUND
+ Excellent realistic effects and atmospheric music.
- More speech would have been nice.

LIFESPAN
+ Almost like a bottomless toybox.
- Not so much fun without friends.

OVERALL
Too many flaws to make it *the* essential launch game, but it's an enjoyable, hugely customisable, frighteningly hard blast.

86

RAMPANT

DAVE DOAK

PSM2 quizzes the man behind *'Splitters* about his game's 'quirkier' features...

Where did you come up with the idea of the TimeSplitters, and what are they actually supposed to be?
The TimeSplitters are based on an early concept for a horror baddie. They're supposed to be a corny sci-fi B-movie excuse for stringing a whole load of disparate characters and environments together. We think they fit the bill quite well.

Why can't you blow zombies limb from limb, circa *House of the Dead*? Is it another age-rating issue?
Not really. We did decide to avoid gratuitous gore in *TimeSplitters*, but I'm afraid that there's not much consistency between age-ratings and content. For instance, the decapitation in *TimeSplitters* has been interpreted in some quarters as something which crosses a line indicative of extreme violence – we thought it was a tongue-in-cheek feature which added gameplay. If we'd had limbs coming off as well, who knows what might have happened.

All censorship is, in the end, fairly arbitrary and often the rules are often sadly ignorant of context.

Be warned, there are plenty of people in this world, who if they have their misguided way, will destroy videogames.

You've clearly got the ability to generate masses of on-screen enemies. Why did you go for accurate zombie head-shooting, rather than wading through masses of them?
Shooting the heads off just seemed to offer more gameplay, it's mighty satisfying to pop a couple off at close range with the shotgun and then just have time to reload before the next zombie lunges. However, some of the challenges involve some serious zombie overload – perhaps you should look to them for your undead fix?

What made you decide not to include a jump button, and why doesn't the game allow players to roll as the computer can?
We have never been fans of jumping in first-person games. It seems to me that there are a couple of very good reasons not to implement jump.

Firstly, it can quite easily become an evade button in Deathmatch scenarios and suddenly the game turns into a mad pogo-ing session.
Also, any kind of precision jumping involves continually looking down in order to position your imaginary feet correctly which is very dull. In single-player levels jumping promotes stupid jumping 'puzzles' – in *Half Life* the most annoying parts of the game were based around jumping. In any case, *TimeSplitters* is certainly not lacking in ledges to leap off and windows to crash through – all perfectly achievable without the aid of a jump button.

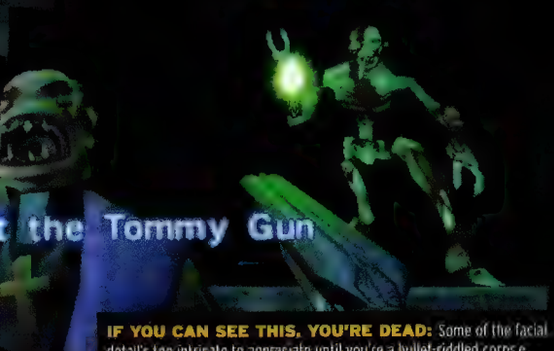
If you've got the Weapon preference set to 'Best', your character will always switch to the shotgun when he picks it up. Do you really regard the shotgun as the best weapon?
The shotgun is a highly effective weapon due to the massive damage it inflicts, however the fire rate is obviously a downside. The priorities for the "best" weapon select are based on damage and fire rate (and some subjective opinions of our own!), several weapons are rated higher than the shotgun.

Apart from Robofish, are there any differences between the characters?
The characters all use the same gameplay characteristics. With the vast array of characters in *TimeSplitters* we didn't feel that it would be possible to balance isometric skills effectively in the development time available. It was something that was considered, and I'm sure we'll consider it again in the future.

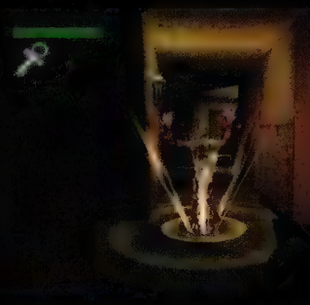
We found ourselves getting sneaked-up on a lot. Do the bad guys hear your shots and go after you, or are they just triggered when you reach a certain point?
The NPCs in Story mode are activated by sight, sound and some communication AI.

Did you intend the game to be a structured challenge, or more of something to tinker and have fun with?
Both. But obviously the 'FPS toybox' feel of *TimeSplitters* was a very important goal for us.

Can you complete the game on the 'Hard' difficulty level?
Yep, though I wouldn't like to be under too much pressure to do it in a limited time.



IF YOU CAN SEE THIS, YOU'RE DEAD: Some of the facial detail's too intricate to appreciate until you're a bullet-riddled corpse.



TIME AFTER TIME: You'll frequently be killed by a 'Splitter that's materialised directly behind you. Which is annoying.

SPHINXTER MUSCLE: The goons in Egypt are quite tough to take out, and the primitive weapons you're given don't help.

TURN OVER FOR MORE *TIMESPLITTERS*

GAME OF THE MONTH

PSM2 TAKES APART A PREMIER PLAYSTATION 2 TITLE FOR YOUR EXCLUSIVE PLEASURE...

TIMESPLITTERS VS UNREAL TOURNAMENT

So, we turn to the Deathmatch you've been demanding, only to find the participants shuffling their feet and refusing to fight. The truth is, *'Splitters* and *Unreal Tournament* are quite different games – one's an ultra-violent, chromed-up celebration of killing; the other's a quirky, entertainingly speeded-up and improved version of *GoldenEye*. But if you still want a fight, you've got it. Please bear in mind that *Unreal*'s currently still in production, and the ratings below reflect our experience with the early code...

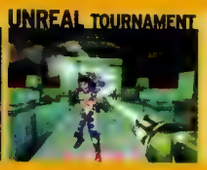
PLOT

Ultra-violent televised bloodsport against ludicrous time-travelling chicanery. Sorry, but no-one's getting any points for that.

0-0

WEAPONS

'Splitters has loads of them, with plenty of historical variety, but each of *Unreal*'s is perfect for a certain situation.



0-1
Weapons

ATMOSPHERE

Unreal's futuristic arenas feel a bit sterile, while *TimeSplitters*' spooky mansions and abandoned tombs reek of menace.

1-1
Atmosphere Weapons

CHARACTERS

Unreal's collection of leather-clad steroid cases barely put up a fight against *Splitters*' crew of intrepid, huge-moustached heroes.

2-1
Atmosphere Weapons Characters

BLOOD

Spurting decapitations in *Unreal*, with plenty of throat-clutching, but not a hint of the claret in *'Splitters*. Unfair?

2-2
Atmosphere Weapons Characters Blood

HUMOUR

Unreal's po-faced genocide doesn't quite cut it against *TimeSplitters*' cheekily-designed retro charm.

3-2
Atmosphere Weapons Characters Blood Humour

EXPLOSIONS

Unreal has ear-imploding, tooth-rattling blasts. *'Splitters* has timid yellow flashes that go 'whumph'. Disappointing.

3-3
Atmosphere Weapons Characters Blood Humour Explosions

MODES

The frenetic Bagtag nearly clinches this one for *'Splitters*, but *Unreal*'s inspired Assault just edges it.

3-4
Atmosphere Weapons Characters Blood Humour Explosions Modes

HEAD SHOTS

Yep, in both of them. A congratulatory shout for getting them in *Unreal*, but it's the only way to kill *TimeSplitters*' zombies. Top.

4-5
Atmosphere Weapons Characters Blood Humour Explosions Head Shots Modes Head Shots

SOLO PLAY

Unreal's single-player mode is OK, but feels like a poor substitute for having friends. *'Splitters* is more suited to the lonely.

5-5
Atmosphere Weapons Characters Blood Humour Explosions Head Shots Modes Solo Play Head Shots

SNIPING

An artform in *Unreal*, with a nicely defined sight and smooth zoom. Difficult and pointless in *'Splitters*.

5-6
Atmosphere Weapons Characters Blood Humour Explosions Head Shots Modes Solo Play Head Shots Sniping

AI

Unreal's is frighteningly ruthless and lifelike, but *'Splitters* offers a better variety – from panicky chefs to cold-blooded mobsters.

6-6
Atmosphere Weapons Characters Blood Humour Explosions Head Shots Modes Solo Play Head Shots AI Sniping

NOISES

Unreal's unrelenting cacophony of explosions is fine, but *'Splitters* really makes you listen for the sound of shotguns cocking.

7-6
Atmosphere Weapons Characters Blood Humour Explosions Head Shots Modes Solo Play Head Shots AI Sniping Noises

DAMAGE

Not enough in either, but *Unreal*'s explosion-charred walls, look clean compared to *TimeSplitters*' plate and window-shattering mayhem.

8-6
Atmosphere Weapons Characters Blood Humour Explosions Head Shots Modes Solo Play Head Shots AI Sniping Noises Damage

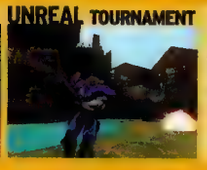
VARIETY

Unreal has anti-grav arenas, lifts and the occasional booby-trap. *'Splitters* has stairs. Guess which entertains us more..?

8-7
Atmosphere Weapons Characters Blood Humour Explosions Head Shots Modes Solo Play Head Shots AI Sniping Noises Variety Damage

LEVELS

Unreal's levels vary widely in quality. *'Splitters* is consistently adequate, but it's the Level Editor feature that puts it ahead.



9-7
Atmosphere Weapons Characters Blood Humour Explosions Head Shots Modes Solo Play Head Shots AI Sniping Noises Variety Damage Levels

VERDICT

The narrowest of victories for *TimeSplitters*. Then again, we're slightly biased, since the early version of *Unreal Tournament* runs worryingly slowly in a four-player Deathmatch, while *'Splitters* pootles along happily at 60fps all the time. The finished version of *Unreal* could clinch it, but then, you'll have to wait until February to find out...

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PLAYSTATION 2 MAGAZINE

PSM2

COMING SOON

ONLY IN PSM2 - TOMORROW'S BIG GAMES FIRST!

SO, WE SAY GOODBYE TO ODDWORLD ON PS2, BUT DON'T THINK THAT THIS IS GOING TO BE THE START OF A CRISIS.

DUNCAN

Lorne Lanning's decision to throw the towel in on *Munch's Oddysee* and slide into bed with Microsoft barely turned a head in the PSM2 office. We've been hearing the whining for some time, and it's always been the same thing: why won't PlayStation 2 do what I want it to do. Well Lorne, it can. *GT3* continues to look better and better as the Polyphony Digital team continue to push PS2's architecture. *WipEout Fusion* is looking every bit the speed-freaking title it's been promising to be and *Dark Cloud's* innovative Georama system is proof that there's still a myriad gaming opportunities to be uncovered.

Elsewhere, you continue to fail to surprise us by bombarding us with your questions about *Metal Gear Solid 2*. In PSM2#05 Hideo Kojima himself will be looking over the suggestions *you* made for one of the most hugely anticipated games ever. You never know, your wishful thinking just might make gaming history.

Another hero that even a couple of hundred tonnes of ancient monument can't keep down is Lara Croft. She's bounced back to PS2 with the promise of updatable, on-line gaming, a new look and a drink problem, see our news story on pg26 for more details.

With news breaking through on *Resident Evil 4*, *Syphon Filter 3* and *Spider-Man* on PS2 the future looks like it might just survive without Abe and his Oddworld. The next time you experience a pang of worry, have a quick look down our Incoming list. Trust us, you'll feel much better. **PSM2**

IN A NUTSHELL

is...

... intelligent, enthusiastic, comprehensive, escapist, entertaining, Japanese savvy, it's written and read by committed gamers and is passionately honest about PlayStation 2. It also likes to make its readers laugh out loud.

is...

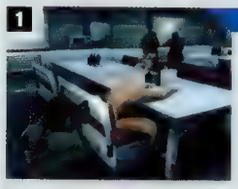
... the place to come for the quirky, pro-mainstream side of PlayStation 2, as well as

READER TOP TEN GAMES

YOUR MOST WANTED

It looks like only a large-scale meteor strike will shift *MGS2*.

1 METAL GEAR SOLID 2

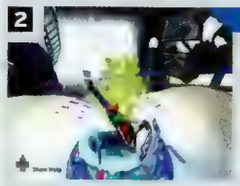


- **DEVELOPER** Konami
- **GAME TYPE** Stealth Adventure
- **ON SALE** Early 2002

Or 'old reliable' as it's now known. Next month, Kojima-san himself comments on your sequel ideas

www.konami.com

2 SSX



- **DEVELOPER** EA
- **GAME TYPE** Snowboarding
- **ON SALE** Now

Well, it's about time. It'll be in the shops by the time you read this. Go and get it, you've no excuse not too.

www.ea.com

3 TIMESPLITTERS

- **DEVELOPER** Free Radical Design
- **GAME TYPE** First-person Shooter
- **ON SALE** Now

Zombies, flares and four-player mayhem? Fantastic, as long as you've got enough change left for a MultiTap 2.

www.eidos.com

4 THE GETAWAY

- **DEVELOPER** Team Soho
- **GAME TYPE** Driving
- **ON SALE** February 2001

The game that's guaranteed to either delight or disappoint everyone. Please make it good, Team Soho.

www.playstation.europe.com

5 MOTO GP

- **DEVELOPER** Namco
- **GAME TYPE** Superbike Racing
- **ON SALE** December 2000

Flay all the skin off your knees in this excruciatingly realistic racer. You'll be swearing at the ghost bike in Time Trial.

www.namco.com

6 THE BOUNCER

- **DEVELOPER** Square
- **GAME TYPE** Fighting
- **ON SALE** Early 2001

Seeing it in motion's a wondrous thing. Another one that could send us all home sobbing. Probably won't, though.

www.playonline.com

7 GT3

- **DEVELOPER** Polyphony Digital
- **GAME TYPE** Racing Sim
- **ON SALE** February 2001

Hurry on to pg38 for more shots of the game that's actually handsome as well as blindingly nippy. Go on.

www.polyphonydigital.com

8 SHADOW OF MEMORIES

- **DEVELOPER** KCE Tokyo
- **GAME TYPE** Adventure
- **ON SALE** Early 2001

Interesting. The plot's excellent, certainly, but we weren't all that convinced by what we saw. Time will tell.

www.konami.com

9 ISS

- **DEVELOPER** Konami
- **GAME TYPE** Football
- **ON SALE** Launch

Yep, *Jikkyou* beat *FIFA* back in PSM#02, and the UK version's even better. Football that rewards skill.

www.konami.com

10 TEKKEN TAG

- **DEVELOPER** Namco
- **GAME TYPE** Fighting
- **ON SALE** Launch

Barely clinging on, but when you play it it's like falling in love for the first time all over again

www.namco.com

LEAST WANTED

GRADIUS 3 & 4

- **DEVELOPER** Konami
- **GAME TYPE** Shooter
- **ON SALE** Now

Can't seem to find some love in your hearts for flat, turgid retro-drivel, then? No, us neither

www.konami.com

MAIL US NOW!

WITH YOUR MOST WANTED GAMES...

Don't have a pop at us, we're just letting you know what you're letting us know. If you can't see the game that you're desperate to play, then mail us. We can share it with everyone **WWW.PSM2.CO.UK**

PSM2 MOST WANTED

THE TEN GAMES KEEPING THE PSM2 TEAM UP NIGHTS.

1 GRAN TURISMO 3
– We're bored of free-roaming games now. We want race tracks

2 METAL GEAR 2
– Just let us play it, Hideo. Oh, come on... just a little go.

3 Z.O.E.
↑ We like what we've seen, and we're playing an early version – nice.

4 WIPEOUT FUSION
✳ It'll have to be good to beat *SSX* – they're different, but the same. Y'see?

5 THE GETAWAY
✳ The Long Good Friday 21st century-style. Fantastic.

6 ONIMUSHA
– A combination of samurai and zombies. It can't fail.

7 UNREAL TOURNAMENT
✳ Great on the PC – and with a four-player spit-screen mode on the PS2.

8 SILENT HILL 2
✳ What we've seen so far made us all feel a bit queasy.

9 NO-ONE LIVES FOREVER
✳ There's something that appeals to us about kitsch spy dramas.

KESSEN
✳ The Japanese version was lovely-looking and horrifyingly violent.

OUR LEAST WANTED

You can take your title and...

VIP
Can a title involving Pamela Anderson possibly have any merit?

"THE MANTRA I KEPT REPEATING WAS 'THIS IS WHAT IT FEELS LIKE WHEN YOU'RE DRIFTING OFF A CLIFF'"

STEVEN RECHTSCHAFFNER *SSX*'s course designer in some of the inspired planning that went into the game. Most of the team are keen boarders who've always wanted to leap off precipices.

CANNED AND ABLE: What do you think about Lorne Lanning's decision? Let us know.

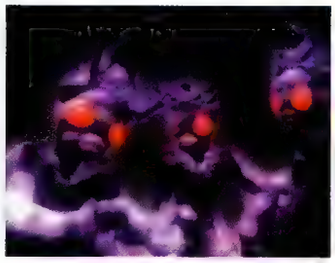
>OUT TO MUNCH シつエカ

ODDWORLD

It's an odd world – *Munch's Oddysee* abandons the sure-fire success of PS2 for the unknown promise of Microsoft's X-Box.

So, Lorne Lanning's ditched PS2. Is this the beginning of the end for Sony – the start of a mass exodus, and just the beginning of Microsoft's conquest? No. To be brutally honest, *Oddworld* had some entertaining graphical touches to go with a nice idea, but we didn't weep bitter tears to see it go. Astute readers may have seen this coming – Lanning's been vocal in his criticism of PS2 since the outset, and readers of PSM2#01's exclusive interview might remember him bitterly commenting 'Regarding hardware, I don't recall any pleasing experiences'.

PSM2 RECKONS *If he'd spent less time making up songs (see Letters pg8) and just got on with it, he might have found things a bit easier.*



RED EYED HAS-BEENS: How much will we miss the quirky characterisations?

MONSTER MUNCH: PS2 won't be seeing this little fella ever again.

BYTESIZE スカラシサ

› Capcom will release *Snowboard Heaven* in Japan this winter. As well as big snowy mountains, it'll feature courses including frozen lake surfaces, construction sites, city streets and tunnels. No relation to *SSX*, then.

› Koei have confirmed that the PS2 version of *Winback* will be released in Japan during December. Early screenshots suggest it's undergone improvements in the conversion from the N64, with a four-player Deathmatch.

› Activision are in the early stages of development of *Tenchu 3*, which is currently set to be even grimmer and bloodier than previous installments. It should include larger environments and some improved camera movement.

› Digital Leisure are planning to re-release the *Dragon's Lair* series on PS2. Alongside *Pong* and *Pac-Man*, it's one of only three games admitted to the Smithsonian institute, but it's still completely unplayable.

› Midway are currently working on a conversion of retro-vertical-scroller *Spy Hunter*. Producer Michael Gottlieb promises 'much smarter enemies and more sophisticated weapons.' It's 65 percent complete.

› Sunrise Interactive will be bringing their own brand of robot-anime combat to the PS2 in *Sunrise Eiyuutan R*, which boasts a hundred-strong voice cast, and promises mechs made up of over 300,000 polygons each.

› T & E Soft are already planning a sequel to *Golf Paradise*, which will add a 'DX' to the title. As well as six new courses, players will be able to add their own faces to characters with compatible USB digital cameras.

BACK FOR GOOD? More polygons and tramp's breath. Lara makes a welcome, and radical, return.

›UK DEVELOPMENT NEWS フハフヌ

NEW RAIDER

Tomb Raider's future could lie in on-line episodic updates and Lara's reliance on cheap cider. Core's Adrian Smith tells all.

And so it all starts again. The first shots of *Tomb Raider Next Gen* have surfaced, and Lara's had a bit of a facelift. You'll no doubt recall that she was buried alive at the end of *The Last Revelation*, only to resurface in flashback form for *Tomb Raider: Chronicles* on PSone. Of course, she was never dead anyway, but the fact that she came so close presents Core with some interesting possibilities. "She may be an alcoholic, she may be a dropout, we don't know yet", says president Adrian Smith, "but she will be *very* different". New concept art has Lara in a Matrix-style leather jacket and shades, while the team has apparently been watching films like The Omen and The Exorcist for inspiration. The biggest change, though, is the new episodic format the game will take. "We've written the *Tomb Raider* book with lots of chapters," explains Smith. "In the first version of the game we're going to deliver three or four of those chapters... a few months after the release of the game we might release more information about one of the characters you've met... if it takes off on-line then we can release stuff on-line." Other planned innovations include other playable characters and RPG-style character development.

PSM2 RECKONS

Brooding menace, potential alcoholism and Sweeney-style jackets could be just what the series needs. Suddenly, we're glad she's not dead.

SOURCE: Gamespot.co.uk

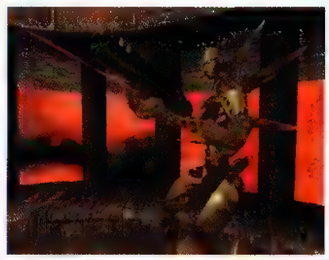
NEW STYLE: We're unsure how Core are planning to style the new-look Lara, but the renders we've seen are ace.

›DEVELOPMENT NEWS シフヨカ

QUAKE 3

At time of going to press, we've just heard from an insider at Electronic Arts that they'll be releasing *Quake 3* on PS2. We were initially invited to an official announcement on November 9th, but the date's been dramatically put back. EA, meanwhile are remaining tight-lipped about the deal.

PSM2 RECKONS *This puts a different spin on the Unreal-TimeSplitters rivalry, and we'll be bringing you more details next issue.*



QUAKING IN OUR BOOTS: We aren't sure when it'll be coming out, but don't expect it soon.

"SHAKESPEAREAN DRAMA AND URSULA K. LEGUIN'S EARTH-SEA TRILOGY SERVED AS INSPIRATIONS EARLY IN THE PROJECT... IN STRANGER MOMENTS, IT COMES FROM THE PHONE BOOK"

JASON SCOTT VOLITION

The Summoner's writer explains some of the influences behind the game's elaborate plotting.

BYTESIZE CONT スカヨシウ

› Irem have announced plans for *Gekisya Boy 2*, a sequel to their popular photography simulation. Released in January 2001, the game involves exploring stages and quickly photographing objects as they appear.

› **Taito are on the verge of releasing another game for their voice recognition controller. *Mah Jong Declaration* will have you bellowing commands into the headset to keep up with the real-time action.**

› Majesco, the publishers best known for *Rainbow Six*, have announced plans to ship at least two titles for PS2 next year. They've denied that either is based on the Fineline cartoon characters they hold the rights to.

› **Namco are bringing *Truck Maniac* to the PlayStation 2 this December. The game will features hi-res graphics, branching paths, and the ability to modify your truck's performance and appearance by getting paid for deliveries.**

› THQ are currently working on *Championship Motocross 2002* featuring Ricky Carmichael. It'll feature 24 professional riders, 12 licensed events and eight fantasy events, as well as new bikes and tricks.

DON'T MISS

BIG GAME NEWS, DELIVERED FAST:

REVIEWS pg62
Fill your brain with unbeatable buying advice.

STRATEGY pg110
Secret stuff *They* don't want you to know...

SUBSCRIPTIONS pg120
Don't miss an issue of PSM2 with our great offer.

INCOMING!

Zone of the Enders moves its metallic coding forward to a highly possible launch in March 2001. Could this be the mech title to beat all others? Check out our servo-assisted preview on pg28.

December 2000

Super Bust-A-Move	Acclaim
RC Revenge Pro	Acclaim
Street Fighter EX3	Virgin/Interplay
Sidewinder	Virgin/Interplay
Disney's Dinosaur	Ubi Soft
Dead or Alive 2	SCEE
Eternal Ring	Crave/Ubi Soft
Evergrace	Crave/Ubi Soft
Armored Core 2	Crave/UbiSoft

January 2001

ESPN Winter X Games	Konami
Shadow Man 2	Acclaim
Donald Duck Goin' Quackers	Ubi Soft
Gun Griffon Blaze	Virgin/Interplay
Kengo	Crave

February 2001

Project Eden	Eidos
NBA Hoopz	Midway
Moto GP	SCEE
Shanghai True Valour	Sunsoft
Jungle Book	Ubi Soft
Warriors of Might and Magic	3DO
WDL: Thunder Tanks	3DO
Army Men: Air Attack 2	3DO
Army Men 2: Sarge's Heroes	3DO
Unreal Tournament	Infogrames
ESPN NBA 2Night	Konami
Shadow of Memories	Konami
Carrier: The Next Mutation	Jaleco

March 2001

ESPN NHL Hockey Night	Konami
F1 World Grand Prix	Konami
Shadow of Memories	Konami
The Bouncer	Square/Crave
The Gift	Cryo
Music 2001	Codemasters
LMA Manager	Codemasters
World Snooker 2	Codemasters
Herdy Gerdy	Eidos Interactive
Rally Championship	Electronic Arts
Superbikes 2001	Electronic Arts
Black and White	Electronic Arts
Need for Speed	Electronic Arts
WipEout Fusion	SCEE
Formula 1 2001	SCEE
Gran Turismo 3	SCEE
WDL: Warjetz	3DO
Player Manager 2001	3DO
MDK 2: Armageddon	Virgin/Interplay
Stepping Selection	Jaleco

April

Army Men: Lock 'n' Load	3DO
Army Men: Vikki's Adventure	3DO
Zone of the Enders	Konami
Ephemeral Fantasia	Konami
Age of Empires 2	Konami

Spring/Summer 2001

Seven Blades	Konami
Red	Konami
Summoner	THQ
Red Faction	THQ
Evil Dead: Hail to the King	THQ
Gauntlet Dark Legacy	Midway
Oni	Take 2
Evil Twin	Ubi Soft
Dukes of Hazzard 2	Ubi Soft
Top Gun	Titus
RoboCop	Titus
Roadsters	Titus
Onimusha	Capcom

Late 2001

Stunt Man	Infogrames
WWF Smackdown	THQ
Pure Ride 2	THQ
CMX 2002	THQ
Tetris	THQ
Final Fantasy 10 and 11	Square
High Heat	3DO
360 Challenge	Acclaim
Gunslinger	Activision
Kelly Slater's Pro Surfer	Activision
Mat Hoffman's Pro BMX 2	Activision
Shawn Palmer's Pro Cross	Activision
Star Wars Episode 1 Starfighter	Activision
Star Wars: Online	Activision
Street Lethal	Activision
Super Bombad Racing	Activision
Tony Hawks: Pro Skater 3	Activision
Aliens: Colonial Marines	Fox Interactive
Legacy of Kain: Soul Reaver 2	Eidos Interactive
World Sports Cars	Empire
Starsky and Hutch	Empire
Ghostmaster	Empire
VIP	Ubi Soft
Peacemakers	Ubi Soft
Jaques Villeneuve Racing	Ubi Soft
Road To Eldorado	Ubi Soft
Suzuki 2	Ubi Soft
Speed Devils 2	Ubi Soft
Eternal Blade	Mattel Interactive
F1 Championship Season 2000	Electronic Arts
FIFA 2001	Electronic Arts
Kessen	Electronic Arts
Knockout Kings 2001	Electronic Arts
Nascar 2001	Electronic Arts
NBA Live 2001	Electronic Arts
Theme Park World	Electronic Arts
The World is Not Enough	Electronic Arts
No One Lives Forever	Fox Interactive
Spy Hunter	Midway
Silent Hill 2	Konami
Metal Gear Solid 2	Konami
Kionoa 2	SCEE
Seven	SCEE
Bloody Roar 3	SCEE
Rally Circuits	Rage
Lotus	Virgin/Interplay
Run Like Hell	Virgin/Interplay
Baldur's Gate Legends	Virgin/Interplay
Dream Audition	Jaleco
Rock'n Megastage	Jaleco
US Navy Seals	Jaleco
Titanium Angels	SCi
Thunderbirds	SCi
The Italian Job	SCi

To Be Confirmed

Tomb Raider: Next Gen	Eidos Interactive
Commandos 2	Eidos Interactive
Thief 3	Eidos Interactive
Grand Theft Auto 3D	Take 2
Syphon Filter 3	SCEE
Spider-Man	Activision
Twisted Metal: Black	SCEE
Resident Evil 4	Capcom

This list correct – to the best of PSM2's knowledge – as this issue went to press

COMING SOON

ONLY IN PSM2 - TOMORROW'S BIG GAMES FIRST!

ERA OF AN ENDER

UNHAPPY ACCIDENT

Fourteen-year-old Leo Stenbuck and heroine Celvice Klein are the reluctant mech pilots on a collision course with the evil military robots of Z.O.E.

EXPECTED UK APRIL 2001 JAPAN FEBRUARY 2001

ZONE OF THE ENDERS

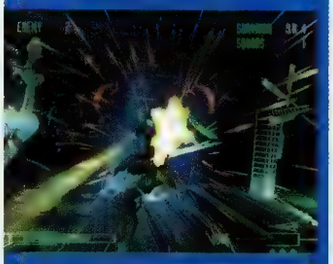
Think those screenshots look too good to be true? You shouldn't. We're *playing* Hideo Kojima's first PS2 game, and stumbling away loudly excited...

ZONE OF THE ENDERS

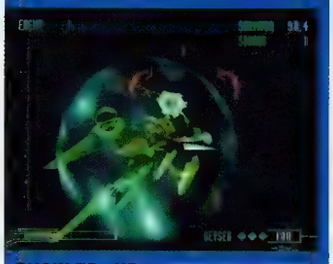
"GAMEPLAY SHINES FROM EVERY PANEL OF KONAMI'S SCI-FI MARVEL"

PROTECTION

STRONG ARM TACTICS: Tactically, the gameplay's not straightforward.



FLAK, JACK IT: Under attack you have to make split-second decisions.



BUCKLER UP: Recharge your secondary weapon, or play safe behind your shields.

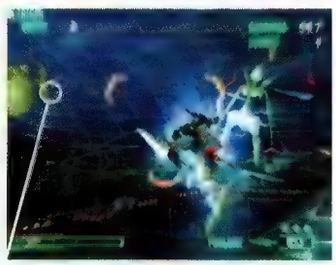
CHOKE AND DAGGER: Long-range futuristic weaponry mixes it with more noble forms of combat.

CLOSE COMBAT

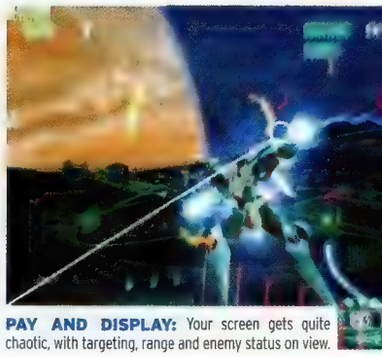
As you move in for the kill your mech (Jehuty) will trade his standard blaster for a powerful laser sword. If that doesn't satisfy your oil-lust, hold the Grab button to lunge at your foe, grip them by their stupid tin necks and smash them through a warehouse – to the delight of onlookers. It's like *WWF* in tinfoil.

CUT AND RUN: Lighting effects react spectacularly to your choice of weapon, and the damage you do with it.

ENDER BENDER: Mangling a rival mech is much more satisfying when you're face-to-face.



PAIN IN THE BACKSIDE: These well-armed drones don't have much rear armour, so get 'em in the arse.



PAY AND DISPLAY: Your screen gets quite chaotic, with targeting, range and enemy status on view.

INFO

- **DEVELOPER** KCEJ West
- **PUBLISHER** Konami
- **GAME TYPE** Mech Combat
- **COMPLETE** 65 percent

ANTICIPATED FEATURES

- Fantastic weaponry – the Geyser energy mines are cluster bombs that stick to flat surfaces and emit energy tripwires.
- Interactive scenery dynamics – expect incredible smashes and blazes.
- Superb AI – your on-board computer will 'learn' from your moral choices in the game and react accordingly in future. Every friendly building you destroy will ebb your integrity and conscience. Do you want to become colder than the machine you fly?
- Two-player combat – though details are unconfirmed.

Can this man do no wrong? Having re-defined the action-adventure genre with *Metal Gear Solid*, Hideo Kojima is poised to perform similar miracles with giant fighting robots. Cast your eyes at those graphics – they're in-game shots, and understand that nobody is doing more to push your PS2 in bold new directions.

Z.O.E. is a welcome surprise. Traditionally, videogames have reduced the slick, explosive hysteria of mech-Anime into tactically laboured exchanges between polygon toasters. Abysmal levels of scenic interaction have become the standard. Well, put those awful memories of *G-Saviour* behind you, because gameplay shines from every panel of Konami's sci-fi marvel.

COMBAT ROCK

The usual pitfalls have been avoided with some clever tricks. The game camera 'locks on' during combat, so you always face your opponent. This removes the octopus-fingered dexterity required to navigate in three dimensions. You use the left Analogue nugget to circle around your opponent, and let the vertical movement adjust automatically.

You can even swap between targets with a quick button tap. It's a simple, but effective, system that lets you focus on the core activity of dishing out destruction.

Carnage is delivered in an explosive variety of shapes and colours. The two basic attack moves combine with the Boost button to unlock a variety of techniques. Choose between limb-shattering grabs and neon tentacles of laser death. Either way, the action never stops short of the spectacular, or satisfying.

POWER SHOWER

The detailing on the mechs' hi-tech surfaces is simply breathtaking, and the frame-rate doesn't suffer with multiple robots on-screen. The greatest effect is when you hurtle an opponent into the destructible scenery. As you tense your grip on the opposition, the screen starts to blur and your mech glows wildly in a show of extreme power. It really does feel like you're in charge of a skyscraping metal behemoth, not Tweeky from Buck Rogers.

Hideo Kojima is keen to inject the game with emotion. Let's face it, towering, stomping mechanoids have less natural charisma than Gail Porter. The story will focus on the very human tale of 14-year-old Leo Stenbuck, the reluctant saviour of mankind who stumbles upon the mysterious mech, Jehuty, and is thrust into battle with the oppressive robots of Z.O.E.

The hackneyed plot is delivered with genuinely engaging cut-scenes, which show off the full range of the much-vaunted 'weepy' storyline.

The gameplay's in, the graphics are ready and we're expecting Kojima to stamp quality all over this sci-fi domain – bring it on. **PSM2**

Preview footage of Z.O.E. is available on the free video with PSM2#01. The UK release is tentatively scheduled for April 2001.

TURN OVER FOR MORE *Z.O.E.*

COMING SOON

ONLY IN PSM2 - TOMORROW'S BIG GAMES FIRST!

HOME TO BOOST

The Boost button lets you unlock the hidden power of your secondary weapons. As you charge the button, a maelstrom of energy surrounds your mech, leaving you temporarily unable to activate your shields. There's a fine tactical balance to be struck between dishing out the killer strikes and covering yourself from incoming attacks. Perfect for those 'I have the power' He-Man moments.

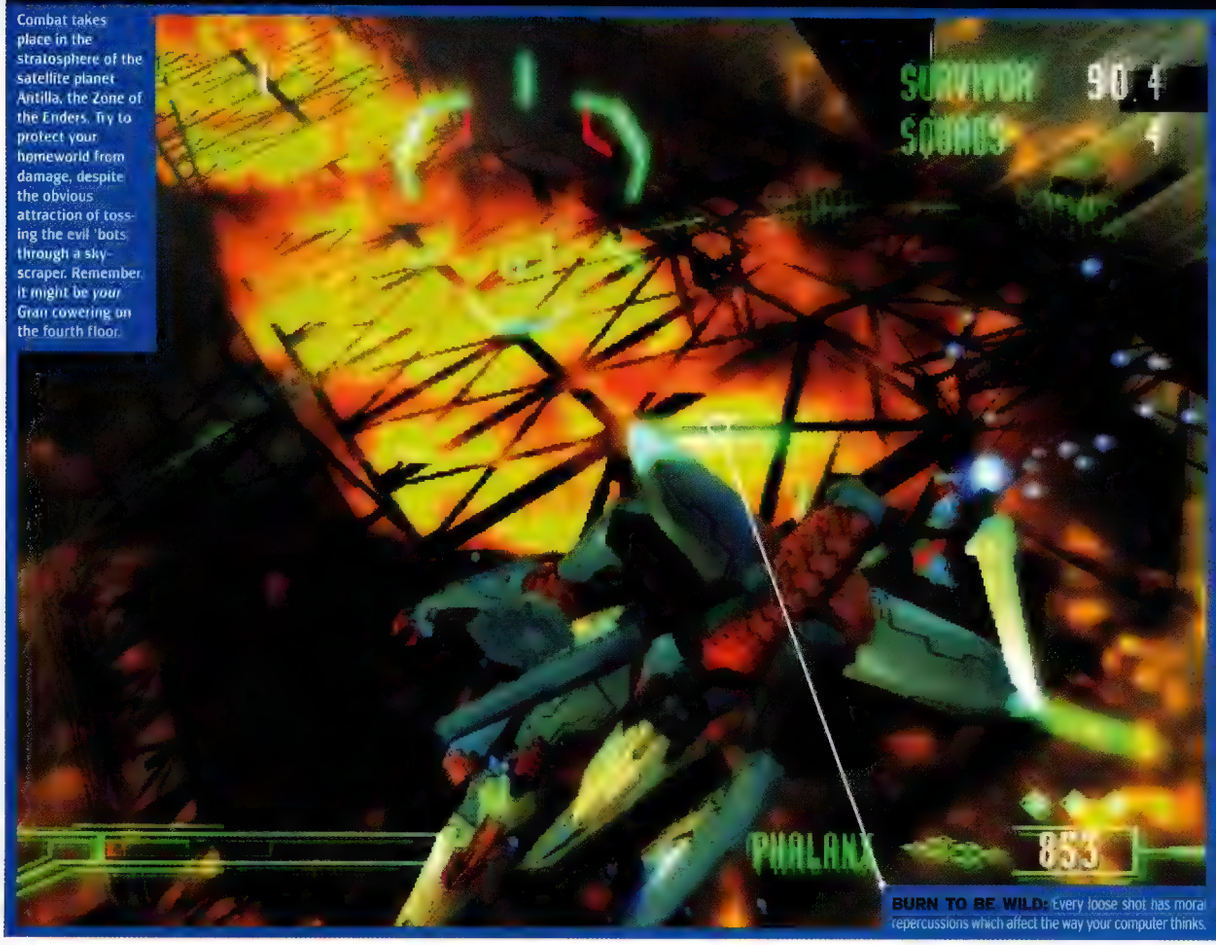
SUCKING UP: You're vulnerable to attack if you charge your secondary weapon.

MAKE DO AND MEND: Metatron material is available on levels to repair your orbital frame.

BALLS UP: Relative effects give you a real sense of the individual weapon's power.

HOT IN THE CITY

Combat takes place in the stratosphere of the satellite planet Antilla, the Zone of the Enders. Try to protect your homeworld from damage, despite the obvious attraction of tossing the evil 'bots through a skyscraper. Remember, it might be *your* Gran cowering on the fourth floor.



BURN TO BE WILD: Every loose shot has moral repercussions which affect the way your computer thinks.

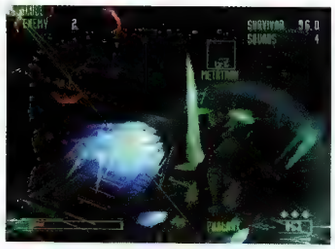
SURROUND'S SOUND: With an enemy approaching, look out for vulnerable buildings.

HIS LATEST FLAME: ...or you could be looking at an accidental catastrophe. *Jeeesus.*

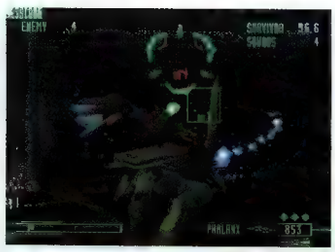
DISTANCE'S RELATIVE: The environment stretches out to the biosphere's horizon, impressive.

ZONE OF THE ENDERS

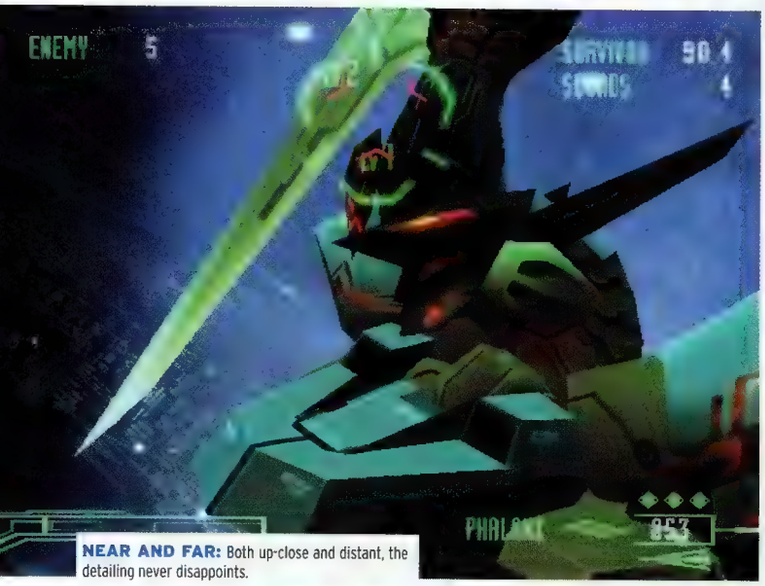
"CARNAGE IS DELIVERED IN AN EXPLOSIVE VARIETY OF SHAPES AND COLOURS"



JET AWAY: Your orbital frame's highly manoeuvrable – quick boosts should keep you out of trouble.



SHOOTING THE RAPIDS: We're impressed by the sheer diversity of available armaments.

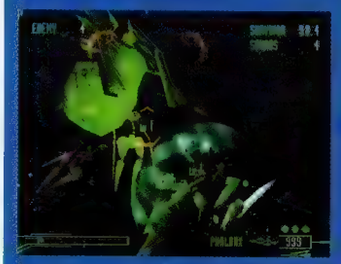


NEAR AND FAR: Both up-close and distant, the detailing never disappoints.

LOCK, 'BOT AND TWO SMOKING BARRELS

The evil 'bots like to attack in numbers. Thanks to the clever targeting system you can shuffle between multiple enemies with ease, and keep an eye on incoming attacks. Despite the automatic adjustment of your vertical position to match the enemy, you can still override the controls and swoop high or low to dodge their missiles.

OVERWHELMED: [illegible] a time causes some tense moments.

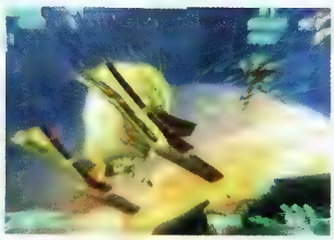


BOMB BAY MIX: Each enemy requires subtle changes in strategy to defeat them.

HEAVY SOUL: Cumbersome, but well-armed 'bots have weak spots – blast them from behind.

HARD AND FAST: The Jehuty frame gives you speed and a hefty wallop in combat.

BEAM AND GONE: *Z.O.E.'s* very heavy on the retina-searing laser effects.



LIGHTEN UP: The atmosphere changes swiftly with the environment's lighting.

MESSING ABOUT IN MOTES: *Z.O.E.'s* particle effects have impressed us.

GLOBE ALONE: Using every aspect of your frame's capabilities is essential in *Z.O.E.*

SECONDS OUT: Your secondary weapon option screen lets you choose custom attacks.

MECH MASTERY IN *YOUR* HANDS

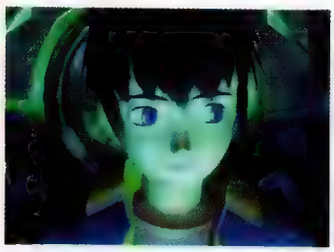
The controls have been designed to allow for free-flowing battles, without strangling the tactical depth. You'll be able to win battles within minutes, but you'll be finding new techniques for hours to come – easy controls, involved mechanics, like *SSX* or *Tekken*. The action only halts when you change your secondary weapon. The menus are simple and easily navigated – use this brief break in the chaos to study the radar for essential power-ups and mission objectives.

TURN OVER FOR MORE *Z.O.E.*

DATE WITH DESTINY

Z.O.E. throws you headlong into the action. In the very first scene, our hero Leo is forced by his bully friends to steal from a military junkyard. While there, the site is attacked by the military regime of Mars, called *Z.O.E.* The other boys get killed and Leo runs away guilty and afraid. He stumbles into a deserted building and finds the mysterious robot Jehuty. In no time at all, you're fighting against *Z.O.E.*'s most dangerous mech pilot, Viola. Learn fast, or die...

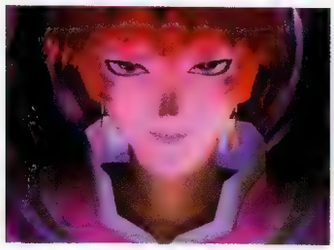
QUICK FIX FITTER: Constant maintenance is essential to your survival.



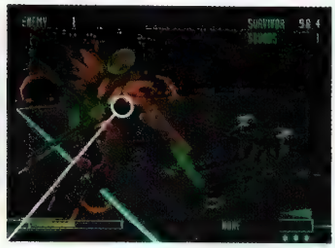
LEO STENBUCK: Your teenage hero, now with more problems than the majority of his peers.

CLASH OF THE TITANS: It's here you realise how much you need to learn about combat.

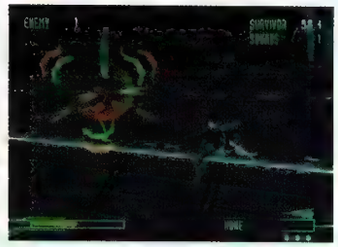
NEITH: Viola's orbital frame, and Leo Stenbuck's Jehuty orbital frame's nemesis.



VIOLA: The immovable object to Leo's unstoppable force. Your first confrontation's over quickly...



UNDER NEITH: ... it's a rude awakening for Leo as he stumbles into Viola's orbital frame...



ARMS AND DANGEROUS: ... it won't be the last confrontation you'll have, you can bet on that.

COME TOGETHER: The *Z.O.E.* code we've been playing only gives you a brief taste of Neith's power.

MISSING THE POINT: Swift defensive thinking can save you a whole heap of broken limbs.

IN THE STUDIO

- **PRODUCER** Hideo Kojima
- **DIRECTOR** Noriaki Okamura
- **MECHANICAL DESIGNER** Yoji Shinkawa
- **CHARACTER DESIGN** Nobuyoshi Nishimura

TEAM HISTORY

There's more talent here than in the Manchester United midfield. Kojima is reunited with *Metal Gear* lead artist Yoji Shinkawa – who was responsible for the design of Solid Snake and friends. Okamura is on hand to inject emotional impact into the plot. He is famous in Japan for his work on *Tokimeki Memoriai*, the girlfriend simulation. Don't be surprised if romance blossoms for young Leo at some stage or other...

FOR MORE INFO

www.konami.co.jp/kcej/products/west/zoe.index.html

PSM2 GUT REACTION

It looks like Kojima-san's done it again. The fighting action feels intuitive within a matter of minutes – aping the frenzied, fast moving attacks of Anime classics such as Gundam or Macross. You can almost feel the impacts as the highly detailed combatants lay into each other, and the incredible interaction with the backgrounds gives the whole experience a high level of immersive clout. The only confusion arises from the intensity of the battles. Surrounded by multiple foes, rockets, explosions and attention-grabbing scenery, it's easy to lose track of events, and the visual display of your various functions and targets can be disorientating. The mission structures seem a little uninvolved – collect object, kill robot – but Konami will hopefully be teasing us with new details quite soon.

+ Genuinely arresting visuals that will make you proud of your PS2, with breath-stealing action and a glorious feeling of empowerment. Hideo Kojima doesn't make bad games.
- Pyrotechnical confusion. Your mission objectives get lost. Without some truly captivating plot twists or greater variety in the environments and enemies, the action could become repetitive and unemotional.

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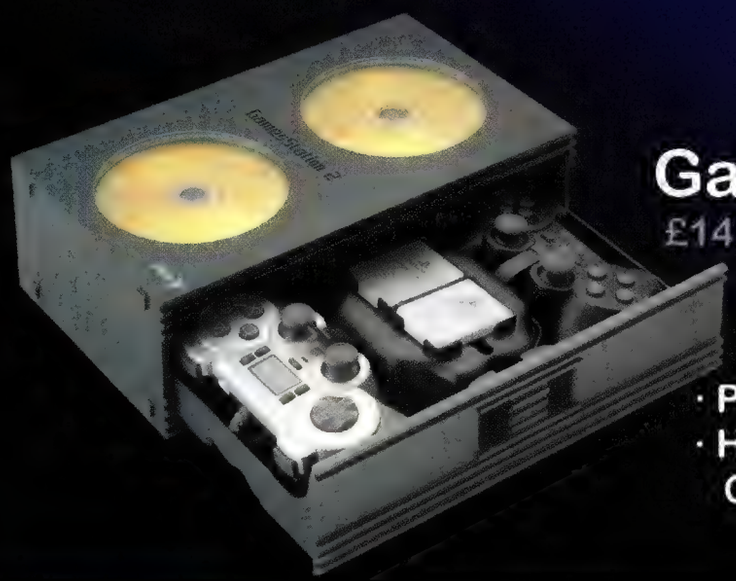

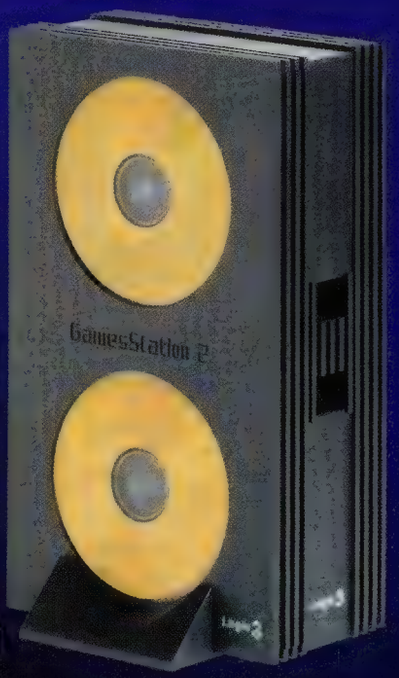

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Logic 3

EXPECTED UK SPRING 2001

SUMMONER

Volition promises a classic RPG, but don't hold your breath if you expect goblins and elves...

Calm down. Here's Sandeep Shekar, programmer on *Summoner*: "You won't see any goblins... and I guarantee you'll never fight a giant rat, plague rat or any other kind of rat." So, bitter disappointment for rabid Tolkein fans, and sighs of relief from everyone else. Several of our other fears have also been laid to rest – the movement system has been updated to an advanced skeletal animation model – doing away with the camp minotaurs we originally saw.

The graphics, although they look a bit dark and broody, are often phenomenal – the numerous cut-scenes use the game engine, and camera angles can be changed throughout the action. Volition have made a sterling attempt to avoid the spoddish note-taking associated with RPGs by giving you a constantly accessible reminder of your quests/past conversations.

The only issue, then, is the gameplay itself. While the fighting system is innovative and promises a great deal, in the early stages it amounts to little more than taking turns grunting and stabbing each other. Also, we've seen some evidence of spectacular later spells, but couldn't manage anything more spectacular than fairy-light level fireballs ourselves.

We'll keep at it though, and bring you more opinion next issue. **PSM2**

Originally slated for launch, the UK release of Summoner's *been put back to Spring.*

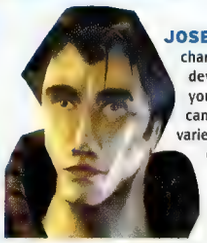
Summoner

INFO
- DEVELOPER
- PUBLISHER
- GAME TYPE
- COMPLETE

ANTICIPATED FEATURES
- Two continents, each with their own dialects and character designs.
- Real-time combat system involving chained attacks and magic.
- Ingenious ring-based summoning system.

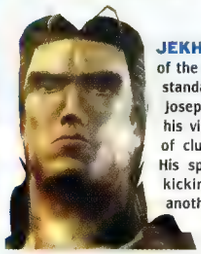
CHOPPER SQUAD

If most RPG crews are the A-Team – bantering misfits who always manage to muddle through somehow – *Summoner*'s posse is the Dirty Dozen. They're a self-centred lot, occasionally homicidal and they don't actually like each other.

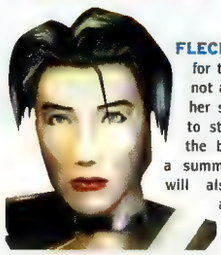


JOSEPH The main character, who can be developed however you like. Our man can also summon a variety of malevolent creatures to do all his scrapping for him – hence the game's title.

ROSALIND Magician woman. Jealous of Joseph's summoning abilities, although since her repertoire includes invisibility, lighting bolts and resurrections, she hasn't got much to moan about.



JEKHAR The fighter of the gang, and understandably annoyed with Joseph for destroying his village with a spot of clumsy summoning. His special attack is... kicking people. Just another knucklebrain?

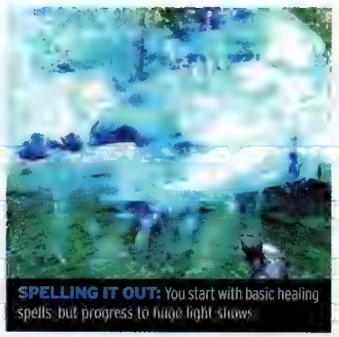


FLECE The thief. In it for the money, and not averse to using her stealth abilities to stab enemies in the back. Her Dad, a summoning expert, will also make an appearance.

HE'S GOTTA HAVE IT...

Each character can be equipped with various items to appear on the traditional RPG looking-up screen, which will show up on their 3D incarnation. Of all the traditional areas (chest, head, arms and shins) only two won't be represented in 3D – 'ring' and 'neck'.

ANY WAY YOU WANT ME: We're not sure what you use on his neck though – bowtie, maybe?



SPELLING IT OUT: You start with basic healing spells, but progress to huge light shows.

ISSUING SUMMONS

Throughout the game, Joseph comes across magic rings that harness his summoning abilities, allowing him to conjure up creatures such as minotaurs, imps and golems. Interestingly, the different ring types, such as Darkness, Flame and Light, can be combined to summon extra creatures, although they won't all be particularly beneficial to the party – and if Joseph's knocked unconscious they'll go on the rampage.

CELEBRATE GOOD TIMES, SUMMON: Summonings can go horribly wrong.

IN THE STUDIO

- **PROGRAMMERS**
  James Hague
  Sandeep Shekar
- **LEAD ARTIST**
  Adam Fletcher
- **COMPOSER**
  Wally Shaw

TEAM HISTORY

Most of Volition's *Summoner* team are best known for 3D shooters such as *Descent* and *Freespace*, but when given free rein, they decided to make an RPG.

FOR MORE INFO

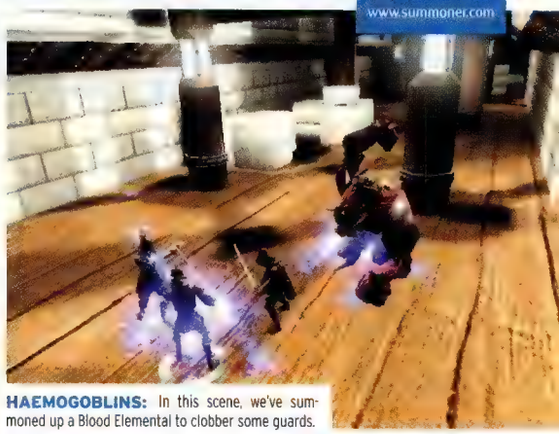
www.summoner.com

MORTAL COMBAT

Summoner's battle system uses a similar structure to Squaresoft's *Vagrant Story* – it takes place in real-time, but you'll be able to pause the action to give orders to characters, as well as using those now-ubiquitous chain attacks. After each hit, you're given a finite amount of time to add another strike using a different direction on the D-pad. This varies among characters – thieves, for instance, tend to be quicker than strapping, buffalo-sized barbarians.

CAST AWAY: Use Rosalind's charms to take on enchanted bad guys and the like.

AXE THE WAY I LIKE IT: And use Jekhar to batter people with axes and hammers.



HAEMOGOBLINS: In this scene, we've summoned up a Blood Elemental to clobber some guards.

MONSTERS OF ROCK: Expect *Final Fantasy*-sized behemoths, like this rock monster.

HORN ON THE GOB: Minotaurs are excellent at fighting, but not too bright.

EFFLUENT LIFESTYLES: In the sewers, you'll encounter Bactites – kill them for the bounty.

TURN OVER FOR MORE *SUMMONER*

BEASTY BOYS

Monsters. Some of them are stupid but vaguely benevolent, some will rip your arms off soon as look at you. As well as *Summoner*'s spell-invoked nasties, there's a fair range of other violent miscreants.

BACTITES: An insectoid race, with the now-standard hierarchy of soldiers, workers and queens making up the numbers. They're intelligent and don't like humans much – so most governments have responded by giving out bounties on Bactite tails, giving you a solid reason to stamp them out once and for all.

BONE KNIGHT: Bringing that pleasing Ray Harryhausen feel to the proceedings, the origins of the bone knights are lost in the mists of time, but are rumoured to be something to do with the 'Chaos of Ten Thousand Years'. They lurk in caverns under the city of Wolong – a bit like the Terracota Army, but more active.

BRASS GOLEM: Metallic, non-sentient menial labourers in Lenele, capital of Medeva. An early puzzle sees our heroes direct some sewer-inhabiting golems to change the outflow direction using a bewildering series of gates, pulleys and levers. The glamourous life of an adventurer, eh?

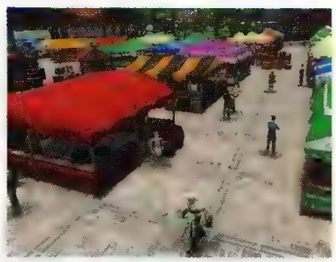
IN CONTINENTS

The game takes place across two different continents, each with their own set of creatures, character designs and architecture – Medeva resembles medieval Europe, while Orenia has a more Asian feel to it (you'd never have guessed that by the names, hmm?). As we join our hero, an Orenian army's trying to murder him because of a prophecy about a summoner overthrowing their ruler (edge-of-the-seat drama from the off, then). In response to this, you suspect, he'll kill them all, abandon his simple peasant life, and – yes – overthrow their ruler. Evil despots – will they ever learn that you just can't mess about with prophecies?

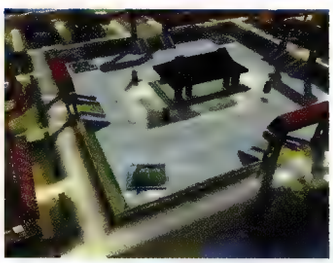
FEEL THE NOISE

■ *Summoner* uses movie-level foley art for its sound effects – squealing pigs and the like have been sampled to make monster noises.

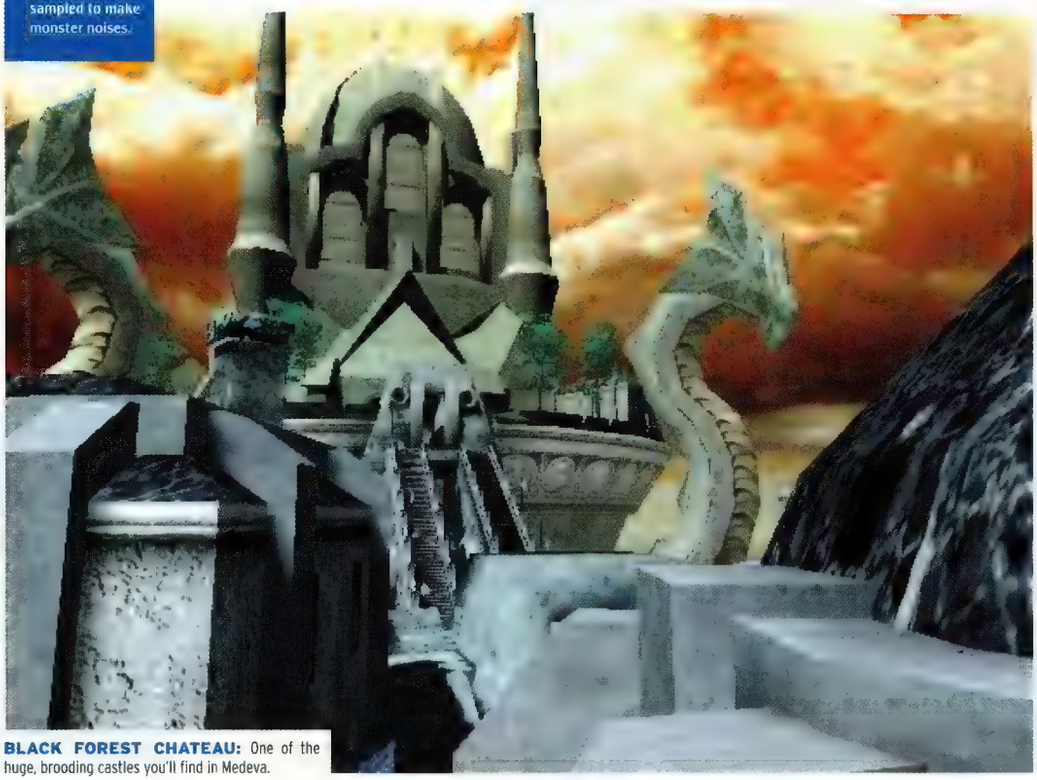
I WANT TO GET AWAY: The continent you start on's a bit grim. Why not nip overseas?



ROGUE TRADERS: You'll find some shady characters down at the brightly coloured marketplace.



TASTE OF THE ORIENT: The pagodas and temples in Wolong are pleasantly atmospheric.



BLACK FOREST CHATEAU: One of the huge, brooding castles you'll find in Medeva.

ON THE SCAFFOLD: As you'd expect, there're plenty of characters lamenting their ruined lives.

PSM2 GUT REACTION

Despite its unhealthy emphasis on magic rings and mysterious prophecies, the plot sounds more substantial and significantly darker than typical RPG-fare, which can only be good. Also, Volition claim that playing straight through the game will take about 35 hours, with an extra ten or so to complete all of the side quests – if the world's as involving as we're expecting, it should keep you happy for a while. It sounds like heaven for die-hard RPG fans – after all, it's being programmed by several of them – but we're not sure if Volition will be able to broaden its appeal. ...

+ Promises some interesting character group dynamics and an extremely complex world.
- Possibly a bit too reliant on skeleton warriors and evil magicians.

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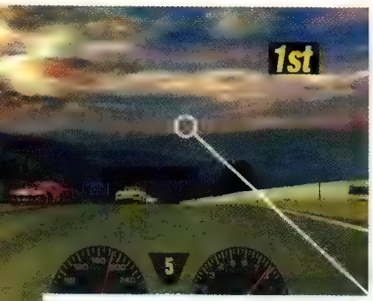
SPECIAL EFFECTS

If you didn't know that *GT3* is likely to be the prettiest racer ever made then you clearly haven't been paying attention. What does come as a surprise, however, is that every clutch of new shots reveals a fresh level of detail.

Sun glare, reflections and shadows are just some of the effects to look forward to, but then there're also atmospheric touches such as distant cloud formations and close-quarter wonders like the superb transparent windscreens noticeable on the replays.



SHEPHERD'S DELIGHT: This glowing red sky gives a moody feel to any race starting at sunset.

WIRED FOR SOUND: Even skinny details like these telephone lines get a look in.

SEE-THROUGH: Amazing transparency effects let you glimpse your rival through the window.

EXPECTED UK FEBRUARY 2001 JAPAN 2001

GRAN TURISMO 3

You may have got used to the new name but you won't have seen these shots of PS2's most wanted racer. PSM2 gives you the low-down on even more of the revolutionary features lying in wait...

According to the game's producer, Kazunori Yamauchi, *GT3* is graphically *GT2* to the power of ten. That's ten times the number of polygons and ten times the complexity of textures used to create the varied scenery and reflections cast across your gleaming bonnet.

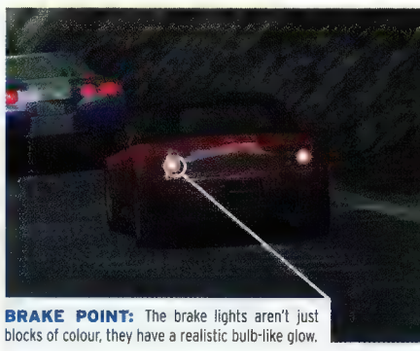
This latest batch of new screenshots has got us more than a little excited. Luscious effects like light filtering through the trees and a low sunset beaming out of the screen are clearly now just part of the overall visual package. Look closely and you'll notice telephone wires strung alongside a starting straight and properly transparent windscreens that allow you to see opposing cars trying to sneak down the inside.

While all this surface loveliness is gratifying, what we really want to check out is Yamauchi's very own take on the Emotion Engine. He's promised fans that *GT3*'s advanced driver will cause rival racers to see red if you consistently cut them up. Improved collision detection coupled with more accurately modelled suspension behaviour should make for even grittier scraps, and while manufacturers wouldn't allow full-on smashes, word is that nobbled shock absorbers, smoke, sparks and flat tyres are still on the cards. Also expect rain and fog as atmospheric elements that realistically affect both visibility and handling.

Gran Turismo 3 *should finally arrive here next Spring.* **PSM2**

GRAN TURISMO™

INFO
- **DEVELOPER**
  Polyphony Digital
- **PUBLISHER**
  SCEE
- **GAME TYPE**
  Racing Sim
- **COMPLETE**
  85 percent



BRAKE POINT: The brake lights aren't just blocks of colour, they have a realistic bulb-like glow.

PASSER-BY

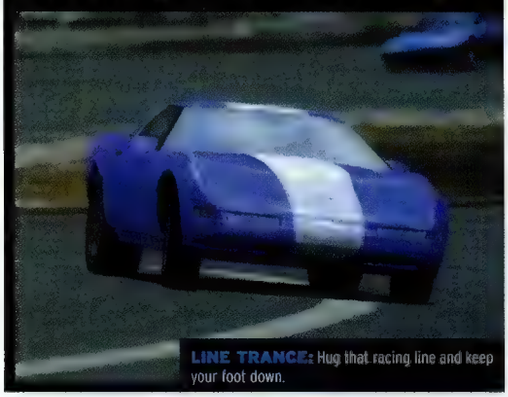
It won't be as easy to pass other cars in *GT3* because they'll react to your aggressive manoeuvres. The answer, as ever, is to drive like a super-smooth pro, tucking in behind the car in front and then nipping out only when you have a valid passing opportunity. Well, you don't want to scratch the paintwork.

BEAMER ME UP! That red BMW in front is holding you up.

INSIDE ATTACK: Have a nibble from the right, but no joy.

HANG BACK: Conserve momentum for the next onslaught.

SQUEEZY DOES IT: Burn round the outside and dive in.



LINE TRANCE: Hug that racing line and keep your foot down.

CAMBER WELL: The more realistic suspension makes judging the camber well hard.

IN-GAME? INSANE!

Normally, you could be forgiven for thinking that the beauty you're being treated to here is merely a product of the tarted-up replay option. But *GT3* isn't a normal sort of game.

These shots show what the game looks like when you're caning it along for real, trying to get the jump on the weaving madman in front. The incredible detail means that you can almost taste your rival's exhaust as you dodge in and out of his slipstream – watching those red brake lights is essential if you don't fancy a shunt.

While the effects haven't been put in as yet we hope to bring you shots showing what it's like to drive in some of the game's hazardous weather conditions very soon. Rain, dust, fog – we half expect the insides of you car's windows to start misting-up.

SHAFT! No run-offs here. Touching the walls of the tunnel can cost you time and track position.

TURN OFF: Signs help you gauge when you should give the wheel a hoick.

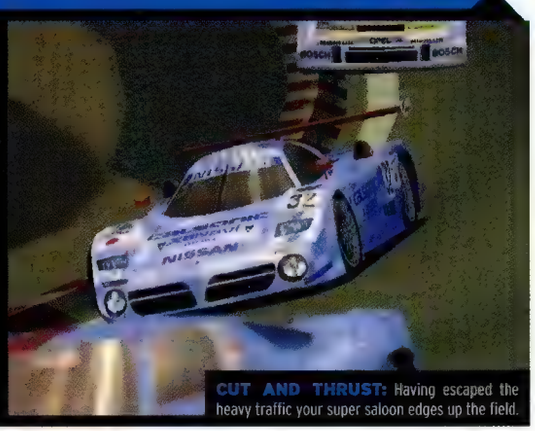
BEHIND YOU: A worried backwards glance shows Mr White gaining on you.

BRING ME SUNSHINE: You can't fault the sunshine beaming through these trees as you scream down the straight.

PLAY AND REWIND

It's no secret that one of the best things about playing *GT1* or *GT2* was the chance to replay the action from a seemingly limitless array of different camera angles. Stunning as the in-game graphics are the replays allow you to drool over any of those pant-wetting effects you may have missed during a heated exchange with your rivals.

HERE COMES NISSAN: Caught in a car sandwich? Time to make your move.

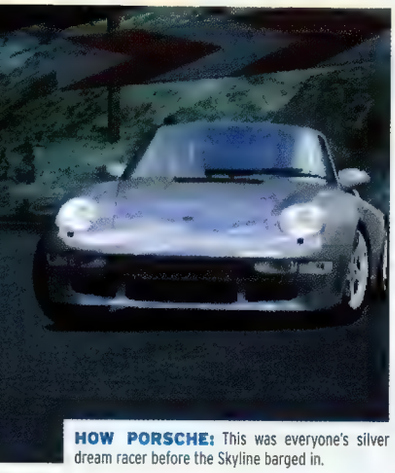


CUT AND THRUST: Having escaped the heavy traffic your super saloon edges up the field.

UP-CLOSE AND TRULY BEAUTIFUL

Using between 2000 and 4000 polygons per car, it's no wonder that the motors look like a work of art. You'll only really appreciate the attention lavished on every last spoiler and bumper when you get close enough to each car that you can eye-ball the manufacturer's badge. This is where the replay truly comes into its own and those reflections take your breath away.

ALFA RAMSEY: It's a good job the gleaming bodywork on this Alfa's all but indestructible.



HOW PORSCHE: This was everyone's silver dream racer before the Skyline barged in.

MINI POP: The small car that never grows old - the Mini Cooper - lends an air of class.

SUN BEAM: The 328Ci is a lovely mover thanks to its fuel-injected, gutsy engine.

EDDIE HONDA: The grey brigade's favourite motor maker delivers some cracking cars.

MALE'S ESCORT: Boy racers love it and so will you with the ooomph of McRae's model.

IN THE STUDIO

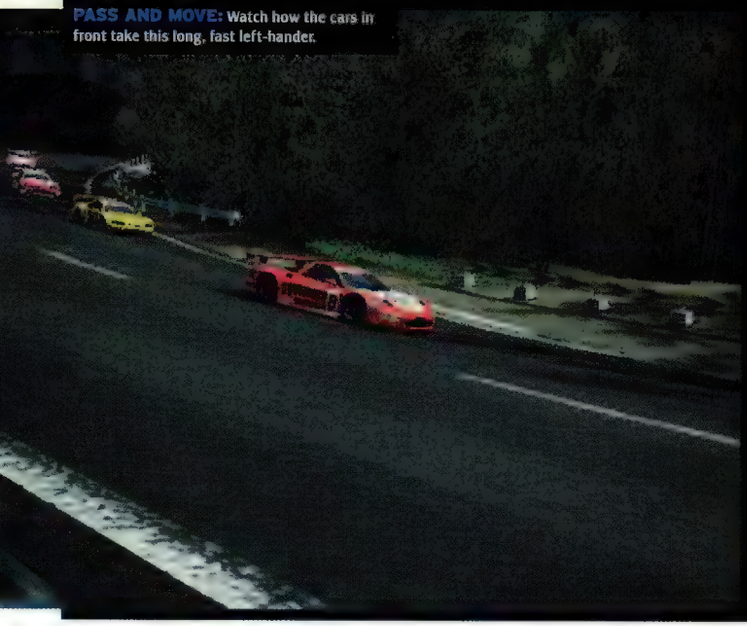
WRITER/ DIRECTOR
Kazunori Yamauchi

TEAM HISTORY
Yamauchi-san is the designer of the *Gran Turismo* games, as well as being the Executive Vice President of Polyphony Digital. The company has over 60 employees, with 40 alone working on the development of *GT2* for PSone (complete with five programmers and two project leaders), which was released in the UK back in January of this year. In April 1998, Polyphony Digital became the fourth development studio for Sony Computer Entertainment. Their next game after *GT3* will be either an RPG/adventure game or another racing title.

FOR MORE INFO
www.polyphonydigital.com

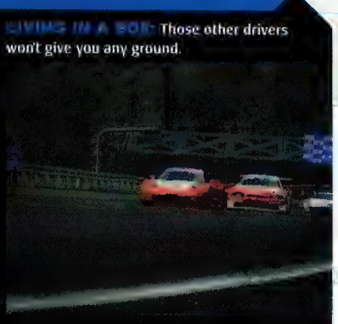
RUNNING WIDE

Because of *GT3*'s grittier collisions and more realistic suspension models it's more important than ever that you not only set up your car perfectly in the first place, but that you maintain correct track position throughout a lap. One wheel put wrong could see all you dreams vanish in a cloud of dust and grit as the pack roar by. Of course it's not your fault, that psycho you cut up earlier gave you a helpful nudge.

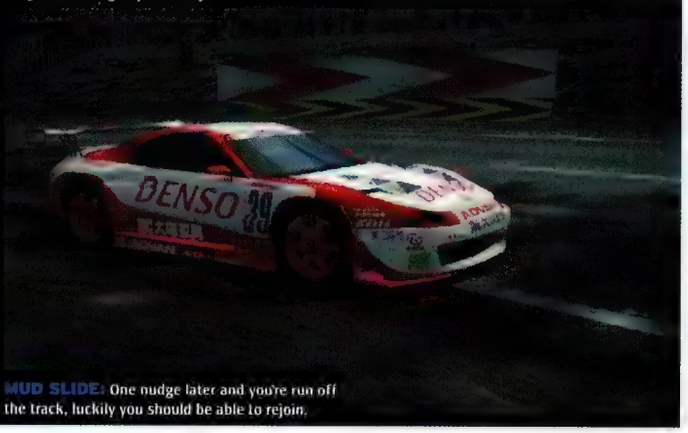


PASS AND MOVE: Watch how the cars in front take this long, fast left-hander.

U-TURN: See that red sign looming up ahead? Prepare for a high-speed hairpin.



LIVING IN A BOX: Those other drivers won't give you any ground.



MUD SLIDE: One nudge later and you're run off the track, luckily you should be able to rejoin.

TAKE THE SCENIC ROUTE

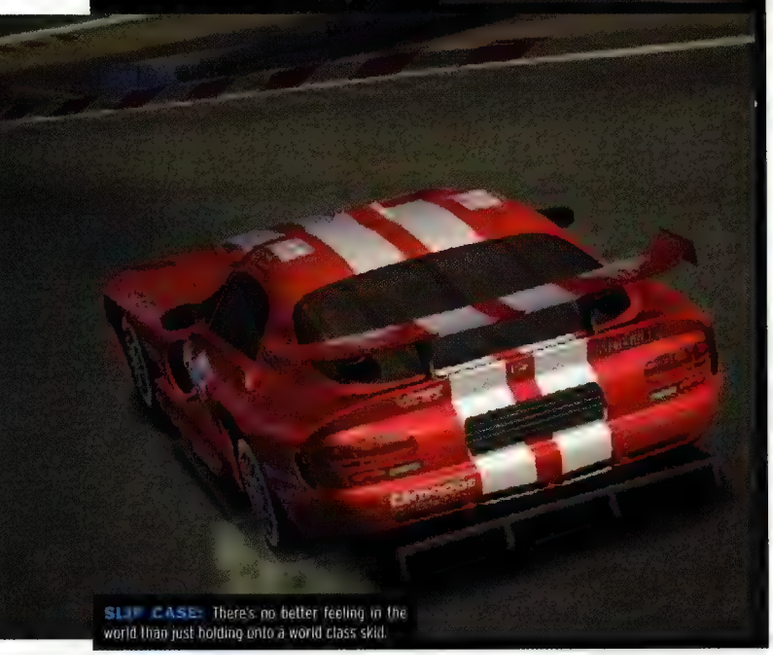
One interesting anecdote that just shows how obsessed Polyphony are with the track detail of *GT3* is that on the Seattle track it was pointed out that one landmark, the Kingdome, was in the game even though it had recently been torn down in real life. Yamauchi explained that they decided to leave it in so that it could be blown up as a special reward for beating the circuit.

PILLAR ASSAULT: Miles of glorious concrete mark out the twisty-turny Seattle circuit.

BLUNDER DOME: Crack the Seattle course and become a demolition man. Nice.

SKIDS ALRIGHT

Even a racer as refined, sophisticated and darn-right sexy as *GT3* isn't averse to a bit of argy-bargy and gratuitous sliding. Despite some improvements the physics of *GT2* have been ported over to the new PS2 game more or less intact. This ensures that there'll still be the same amount of bad-tempered shoving and almost out-of-control skidding that fans of the previous two *GT*s have grown to know and love. We can't wait to get our hands on those souped-up muscle cars and take them for a tumble.



SLIP CASE: There's no better feeling in the world than just holding onto a world class skid.

TREE WHIZZ

We may have shown some pics of the sun streaming down through the trees before but it's impossible not to coo adoringly at the sight of this astounding effect. Yamauchi claims that in places you'll be blinded by flashes of sunlight (as well as have your view compromised by rolling mist). Sounds like an accident waiting to happen to us.

SAP'S MAGIC: Picking out individual sun beams is one way to amuse yourself.

SUN BLESSED: Drive into a pool of light and you could be momentarily blinded.

WET PAINT: The road markings get a boost with extra textures so they look even grittier.

HEAD DOWN: Your suspension will lean as you approach a long tilting corner like this.

BLUR ALBUM: Notice how the blur applied to the car in front makes this replay look sharper.

AUTOEROTIC

The sheer number of amazing effects and touches are what makes this new *GT* such a joy to behold. On their own each technical feature might seem negligible, but cram them all into one game that's built on gameplay fine-tuned over two previous classic titles, and there are no prizes for guessing that *GT3* is going to be more than a bit special.

FULL EFFECTS: Heat haze, close-up blur and some dust particles show off *GT3*'s full glory.

PSM2 GUT REACTION

The more we see of *GT3* the better it gets. Put simply it's going to be the best looking game on PS2. With the extra time that Yamauchi and his team have spent fine-tuning the handling and the balance of the overall game, it's hard to see how it will do anything but astound when it arrives early next year.

+ Fantastic graphics and a range of head-spinningly slick effects are bolted onto a racer that moves very fast indeed.

- We still haven't seen the multi-player in action, plus it isn't much more than an update of the PlayStation's *GT2*.

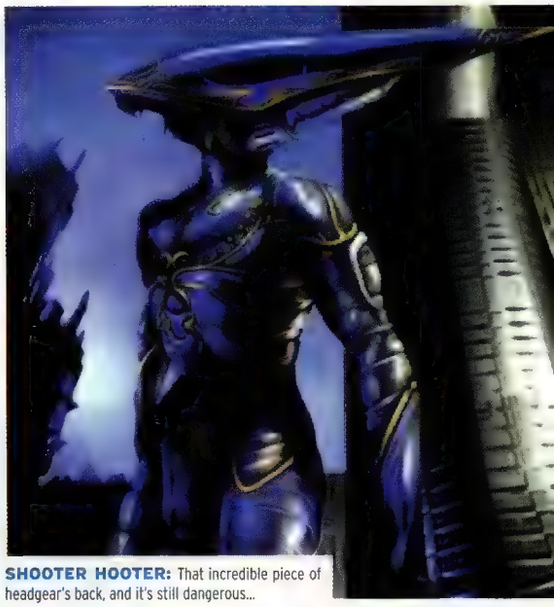
HAZY FANTAZY: The background fades away as the replay makes the most of our shiny car.

FEEL REFLECTIVE: Light glistens off the bonnet of this exquisitely shadowed Altezza.

KERB YOUR DRIVE: An Alfa Romeo rides high as it attempts to cut corners.

The official 4-player multitap for PlayStation 2. Stuff your mates.
How do you like them-Hammered? Pulverised? Humiliated? Plug a multitap into PlayStation 2 and have the wretches whatever way you want. Multiplayer titles including classics like Tekken Tag, Fifa 2001, Dead or Alive 2, Timesplitters and Track & Field. A quick word of warning though. Some amigos may be lost forever.
PlayStation.2

EXPECTED UK MARCH 2001



SHOOTER HOOTER: That incredible piece of headgear's back, and it's still dangerous...

MDK2 ARMAGEDDON

A dark sci-fi remake of *Die Hard*, where Snoopy ventilates robot vegetables with semi-automatic handguns. You heard us. *MDK* returns, bigger and barmier than ever.

In the quest for realism, fun too often gets forgotten. Sometimes, all that's needed is a healthy dose of insanity. *MDK2 Armageddon* hopes to fill this void, combining gameplay and surrealism to devastating effect. What worked for *SSX* should be equally effective for beagles with twin Uzis.

The original *MDK* sneaked out on PSone back in 1997. Its intelligent gameplay was obscured by dark twisted graphics, which alienated a lot of casual players. Despite critical acclaim, the title faded in comparison to the brash *Duke Nukem 3D*, or more cerebral *Metal Gear Solid*.

The hero of the first game, Kurt Hectic, returns for an all-new adventure on PS2. This is no simple port of the PC or Dreamcast version of *MDK2*. Kurt's infamous sniper rifle helmet returns, and yes, it still looks like a phallus for the terminally masochistic. And he's brought friends. Lots of friends. Enter Max the cyborg dog and the mad scientist, Dr Hawkins who created them both.

It boils down to a bizarre third-person arcade adventure with a curious dichotomy – brawn and bullets must be combined equally for success. Each of the three characters handles differently and faces different challenges: Max the dog gets more platforms and battles, Dr Hawkins solves a lot more puzzles. You'll swap between all three in the course of the game.

Essentially, this is a carrion call to the dizzy days of old-skool gaming, when enemies were tough and genuinely entertaining. The bosses in *MDK2* will look nothing short of astounding. Expect equally wild level designs and a hefty learning curve. More canine ultra-violence than *Donald Duck's Quack Attack*, on a superhero scale.

The USA release is scheduled for December this year, the UK can expect it in March. **PSM2**

PROF'S IN THE PUDDING: Switching characters gives the game three different perspectives.

MDK2 ARMAGEDDON

INFO
- **DEVELOPER** Bioware
- **PUBLISHER** Interplay
- **GAME TYPE** Arcade Adventure
- **COMPLETE** 92 percent

ANTICIPATED FEATURES
- 10 levels, optimised for the power of PS2.
- Three playable characters with fine polygon detailing.
- Sniper rifle and Parachute mode.
- Dynamic plot development.
- Voice acting and farting enemies.

GIVE THE DOG A BRAIN

While cyborg dog Max relies on fire-power to carve through the levels, Kurt and Dr Hawkins need to be more inventive. Kurt uses a sniper helmet to pick off foes and target door switches. The poor Doc has to create weapons from the objects he discovers – such as toasters and hand towels. A host of sub-games, including a *Scramble*-style shoot-em-up, complete the eclectic feel.

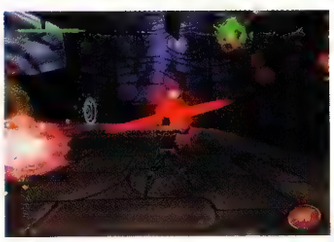
OUT OF SIGHT: *MDK's* excellent zooming sniper view returns, giving you pinpoint accuracy.

PSM2 GUT REACTION

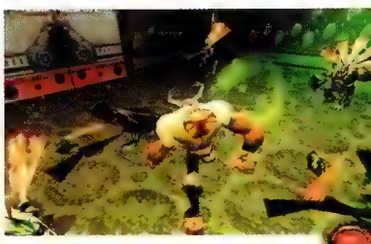
If there're two things we like, it's gameplay and bitches with attitude. *MDK2* promises both, packing a hefty challenge to boot. The level designs show wild imagination, so you can expect to see some pretty unrivalled effects dancing out of your PS2. But until we sit down for an extended playtest, its hard to tell whether the difficulty will be fairly pitched.

+ A much needed waft of originality. The traditional gameplay values should encourage repeated play. We like a challenge...

- ... but a lot of people don't. The PC version was insanely tough, and the genius touches stem from an insanity that might irritate reality-loving gamers.



BLAST GLORIES: Bioware promise lighting effects that'll push PS2's capabilities.



WHO GOES BOSS? Each character will have a boss nemesis as the plot develops.

TEAM PLAYER

You'll be glad to hear that old faithfuls like team Feisar and Piranha are making a welcome return to *Fusion*, while sitting alongside them on the starting grid will be the likes of G-Tech, Xios and Ouricom. The drivers are still a bizarre collection of misfits with a passion for speed and a love of knee pads. From left to right you have: Daniel Johnson, Myima Tsarona, Natasha Belmondo, Pascale Rouser, Roberto Seraio and finally Songen Grey. Each have their own specialised styles of driving and don't take kindly to being rammed in the rear.

TAIL LIGHTS: Where would we be without the old afterburner effects?

BUY, BUY, BUY

Designers Good Technology haven't only been concentrating on craft design, team logos and heads-up-displays, they've also totally revamped the stationary and animated advertising hoardings that surround the tracks. Tear you eyes from the course for a second and you'll be treated to ads for the various teams on billboards the size of office blocks.

FLY THE FRIENDLY SKIES: Team Xios get in a quick plug as you hurtle over this hill.

BIG IS BEAUTIFUL: Even though this hoarding isn't working it's still impressive.

EXPECTED UK SPRING 2001

WIPEOUT FUSION

Red-lining it on a Yamaha YZF-R1 in nothing but your Y-fronts? Think that's fast and dangerous? We'll prepare yourself for the stomach-churning thrills of *WipEout Fusion*.

Fusion. Strange choice of name for this latest update to the *WipEout* series. It kind of conjures up images of all the best bits of the previous games melded together in one seamless package. However, if Sony's Liverpool crew live up to their promises, this version of the game threatens to take the anti-gravity racers beyond that envelope they've been pushing since 1995.

Designers Good Technology have put in overtime coming up with a whole new selection of hi-tech craft which each boast 48 variable parameters, as opposed to the mere seven of the original. Plus, this time round, you get the chance to customise your own rocket-driven suicide sled. Yep, thanks to the new League mode you can earn cash from victories which can then be spent on the tactical specifications. So if you want to specialise in speed rather than brawn, have a quick tinker with the vehicle's six characteristics and trade shields for boosters. Of course, if you're a belligerent type of driver, the opposite is equally true.

There's also been a massive overhaul in driver AI, with your fellow contestants now having the ability to remember your actions during a race. Cut someone up, or crack them with one too many homing missiles and the buggers'll hunt you down, doing everything in their power to ensure you never see the chequered flag.

So there's plenty here to justify the excitement we felt when we first clapped eyes on those initial shots back in July. **PSM2**

WipEout Fusion is hurtling towards a March 2001 release.

WipEout Fusion

INFO
- **DEVELOPER**
- **PUBLISHER**
- **GAME TYPE** Racing
- **COMPLETE** 75 percent

ANTICIPATED FEATURES
- 26 weapons to get involved with including eight 'super' variations.
- 21 courses all with interactive features and multiple routes.
- 16 ships on screen animated at a smooth 60fps plus moving at a real-time speed of 1500kph.

CABIN PRESSURE

Another nice touch, other than the return of the pilots, is the fact that you can actually see their little heads poking up behind the controls.

MR WOBBLY TOP: It's not certain whether the pilot head's will move, but it's still fantastic.

WIPEOUT FUSION

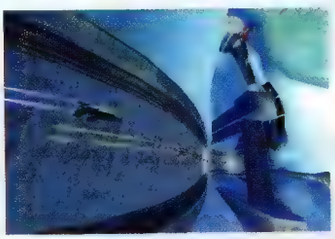
"ALL THE BEST BITS OF PREVIOUS GAMES MELDED TOGETHER IN ONE SEAMLESS PACKAGE"

HEAVYWEIGHT: Thanks to your ability to redesign the craft, you can expect a few odd-looking ships.

TWISTED SISTER

After the stomach-churning antics of *WipEout 3* we ran out of sick bags. Looks like we'll need a warehouse full for this one as the tracks flip and spin you like a toboggan rider in an flume full of oil. Not only that but – borrowing from Studio Liverpool's other sci-fi racer, *Rollcage* – you can even drive on the ceiling if the opportunity presents itself.

FLIP YA FOR REAL: With 16 other vehicles on the track, situations like this can get very messy.



ROLLER COASTER RIDE: And this is just a replay shot. Imagine getting up close and personal.

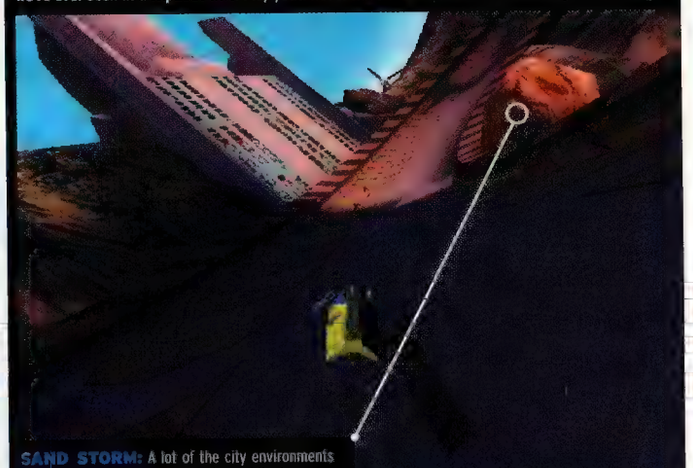
LIGHT FANTASTIC

Just take a moment to check out the lighting effects on in this shot. There's ambient light which can change with the weather conditions, and shaded tone created by the walls of the track, accurate shadows for each of the craft plus the flare of the afterburners. No doubt about it, this is one fine looking racer.

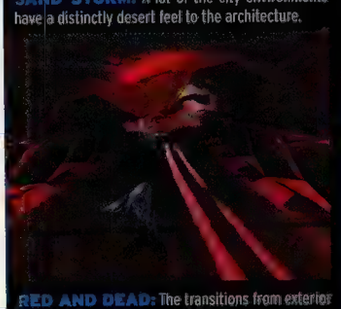
ENVIRONMENT CONTROL: [illegible] are expected to change from race to race.

TRACK ATTACK

Tatooine-esque cityscapes with wind generators one minute, spinning space platforms the next. The tracks, as well as being seriously convoluted, are definitely the most eye-pleasingly gorgeous we've ever seen in a *WipEout* title. Pity you'll never have time to take in their beauty while racing.



SAND STORM: A lot of the city environments have a distinctly desert feel to the architecture.



RED AND DEAD: The transitions from exterior track to tunnels are super slick.

IN THE STUDIO

- PRODUCER [illegible]
- ART MANAGER Colin Fruin
- PROGRAMMING MANAGER Steve Pointon
- DESIGNER [illegible]
- ARTIST Garvan Corbett

TEAM HISTORY

Studio Liverpool, once know as the mighty Psygnosis, have been single-handedly responsible for the revolution in future racing. *WipEout 1* to *3*, as well as *Rollcage 1* and *2* have all helped to perfect the skills they're bringing into play for this revision of the genre.

FOR MORE INFO

www.scee.com

PSM2 GUT REACTION

The more we hear about this, the more we get excited. With confirmation that the DVD will be packed with extra tracks, vehicles and music this is already promising to be one mammoth pile of racing. And not only do we get to play a *WipEout* the size of Venus, we also have the opportunity of racing along multiple routes as well as taking to the ceilings.

+ Even more race modes than the Tournament, Quick Race and Deathmatch options we've already seen.
- It's got a lot to live up to and will need to surpass everything that has come before to avoid the 'just another sequel' label.

COMING SOON

ONLY IN PSM2 - TOMORROW'S BIG GAMES FIRST!

INFO

- DEVELOPER: Sony/Level 5
- PUBLISHER: Sony
- GAME TYPE: RPG
- COMPLETE: 90 percent

ANTICIPATED FEATURES

- Village construction via the Georama system that lets your hero populate his own floating island.
- Interaction with hundreds of citizens located throughout a vast world.
- Six player characters on offer, with more to potentially be unlocked.

SNAKE IN THE GRASS

You can pull off certain special moves in combat, resulting in some impressive death-blow animations from the plucky Toran. This nasty serpent's about to get some spinal ventilation as you leap into the air and drop, sword first, onto its back.

KEANU: After you pounce the camera stops that action and has a quick pan, Matrix-style.

EXPECTED UK WINTER 2001 JAPAN WINTER 2000

DARK CLOUD

The genie's out of the bottle and in the hands of a mad military dictator. His plan? To cover the world in dark clouds full of demons, of course. Time to strap on that sword and reach for your smartest magic gloves.

More details are emerging about *Dark Cloud* and, although there have been rumours that several elements have been dropped to speed production, things are still looking promising for this heavily *Zelda*-influenced title.

We now know that the lead character is called Toran and that he lives in a world divided into two kingdoms. One is dedicated to the peaceful study of magic – Toran's homeland – while the other is populated by a gang of power-crazed generals. The game kicks off with the jackbooted boys stuffing your hero's village with a demon army they've discovered. Luckily a local wizard manages to hide parts of the kingdom in magic capsules which are then captured by the enemy and secreted in their numerous dungeons...

Thanks to the innovative Goerama construction system you can literally put his world back together. You reconstruct your village on a floating island and then move seamlessly into its 3D world to further your quest by opening up more enemy dungeons. Your goal in each of these 16 levelled hell holes is to defeat the demons who guard another piece of your broken realm. Once you've got the errant piece tucked inside your magic glove – no, really – it's off to the construction screen to open more dungeons. And so on...

So far the only thing that's raised a few eyebrows of doubt is the Bemani fighting system which we're afraid might distance the player from the action. Apart from that, everything else is looking pretty impressive. PSM2

We'll have our sources in Japan nab us a copy for review as soon as it hits the shelves.

ALL YOU NEED IS GLOVES

Once you've beaten the boss of each dungeon you get to crack open one of the hidden capsules and see what's inside. The amulet on your magic glove then sucks in the item and allows you to regurgitate it when you reach the floating island. The more dungeons you defeat, the bigger your kingdom.

POD PEOPLE: It could be a person, a building or a magical item in the pod you crack open.

SAY, WHAT TIME IS IT? A quick peek to see if he dropped that volcano off last time he was home.

FANTASY ISLAND: Back on the floating island it's time organise your realm in a God sim kinda way.

THE RUNNING MAN

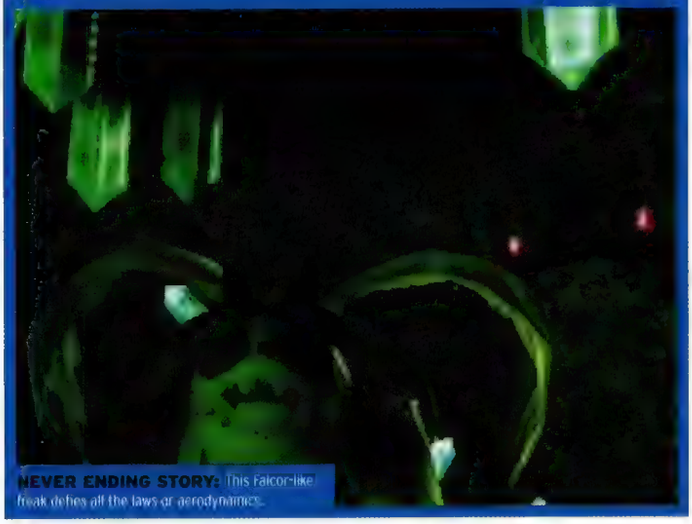
He doesn't hang about does he? And rightly so, as some of the environments we've seen are absolutely huge and thankfully devoid of the invisibly no-go boundaries found in so many RPGs. If you fancy chucking yourself off the walkways into a lake, you can – it won't get you anywhere but it's a nice taste of freedom.

MIDNIGHT AT THE OASIS: Give it a few game hours and the world's bathed in twilight.

CAN'T SEE THE WOOD: There's a great diversity of plant life throughout the island.

UP WHERE THE AIR IS RARE

The problem with living on a floating piece of rock the size of Wales is that it's a bugger to park. Thankfully you can descend to the world below for a bit of dungeon exploration via your trusty magic carpet. Hop on board and you're treated to a nice little aerial cut scene before you eventually touch down.



NEVER ENDING STORY: This falcon-like freak defies all the laws of aerodynamics.

SLASHER PICS

So far we've seen at least three different types of combat featured in *Dark Cloud*. Alongside the special moves and troubling 'follow my leader' combos, there's also a fair bit of hands-on dodging and slashing in the style of *Zelda*. Tap ◎ during a scrap and you even get an instant lock-on à la Link.

IF I HAD A HAMMER: These lumbering trolls are quickly dispatched using a quick slash.

THERE'S A LIGHT: The most impressive scrap we've seen is against this Cloud lookalike.

DICK DASTARDLY: This bloke's the evil general who wrecked your world with his genie.

IT'S A FAMILY AFFAIR: There are six playable characters to get to grips with. Hello love...

A FRIEND IN NEED: You have to rescue this damsel in distress before she's crushed.

BUNNY GIRL: Exchange retrieved items for information about dungeons.

PSM2 GUT REACTION

There's no doubting that visually there's little that can touch this in the world of console RPGs at the moment. The lighting effects and cut-scenes all look mighty impressive, as does the in-game transition from day to night. However, we're still wary of what form the combat system will take, as well as being concerned about the items that had to go to speed up production.

+ The map making – now that we know that it's actually integrated into the gameplay – is an amazing twist, especially when you witness the seamless transition from the overhead view to ground level.
- There's been no mention of magic use as yet, which – this late in the proceedings – may we'll put the wind up die-hard RPG fans.

COMING SOON

ONLY IN PSM2 - TOMORROW'S BIG GAMES FIRST!

EXPECTED UK MAY JAPAN 21 DECEMBER

7 BLADES

Seven deadly sins, the magnificent seven, er... 7-Up. Will seven be the magic number for Konami?

Seventeenth century Japan is the setting for this samurai slasher – a time when the current ruling power (the Tokugawa shogunate) is facing a rebellion from the island of Dejima. Seems that a religious sect armed to the teeth with wooden robots and flying ships – leave those history books at home y'hear – are baying for independence. Your mission? Take control of two of the toughest scrappers in the land (Jigoke Gokurakmaru, a sword master, and Yuri, a female acrobat with a passion for guns), and quash the uprising.

The action takes place across seven huge levels, with the perspective happily switching from first- to third-person, depending on your weapon choice. There are also plenty of destructible surfaces to test your metal on, as well as a wide variety of tooled-up ninjas, samurai and acolytes in body armour. In fact there are so many enemy types that one level alone has been recorded as having over 60 variations.

To aid you in your battle there're about 15 weapons, each designed for dealing with specific situations. For example the 'horse slasher' is good for clearing paths through crowds, while Yuri's pistols are best suited for sniping sneaky rooftop assassins.

Developer Atsushi Horigami has called in the cinematic talents of Japanese director Kaizo Hayashi, so we can expect some excellent plot development alongside the pyrotechnics of special moves and retina-searing explosions.

It's also apparent, from what we've seen so far, that the pacing of the game has been well thought out, with sub-missions for each level taking varying forms. One minute you could be racing to rescue an innocent NPC in distress, the next clearing a hillside of pyjama-clad assassins waving rice sickles.

If this lives up to its promises it could well leave *Dynasty Warriors 2* and *Onimusha* standing still. **PSM2**

The game's out in Japan this winter. Sadly, we'll have to wait until next year for the PAL version.

RAPIER WIT: We're intrigued by the varying weights of weapon available.

PSM2 GUT REACTION

Worries about the camera being none too smart, and the all too frequent event of getting completely lost, still dwell in our minds after we first saw the game at ECTS. However, we still can't help but get excited about Blade's combination of swords, guns and sci-fi lunacy. The sheer amount of enemy types to kill's a bit of bonus, too.

+ Visually things are looking sparkly bright with enough features to give the impression of a *Tenchu 2* with fire for blood.

- We're still concerned that if there isn't enough variation in missions, this could well descend into an endless round of hack 'n' slash.

SLICE OF LIFE

Our man Gokurakmaru is the brawn of the operation with his seven blades, which include a boomerang throwing knife, katana and the massive horse slasher. He also has a handy staff in his inventory as well as a pocket full of lightning-laced special moves. Want to clear a town of ninjas? He's definitely your man.

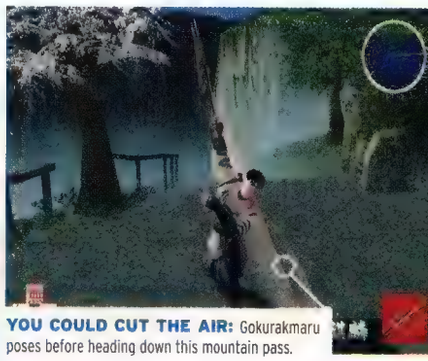
7 BLADES

INFO

- **DEVELOPER**
- **PUBLISHER** Konami
- **GAME TYPE** Action Adventure
- **COMPLETE** 90 percent

ANTICIPATED FEATURES

- Two distinctly unique playable characters.
- Seven bladed weapons to wield (hence the title).
- Eight projectile weapons.
- Seven massive levels packed with sub-missions.



YOU COULD CUT THE AIR: Gokurakmaru poses before heading down this mountain pass.

HEALTH SERVICE: If there are too many of them, you can always peg it and grab some rest.

TREAT HER LIKE A LADY...

Yuri's much more agile than her male counterpart and, as a result, can reach the parts other fighters only dream about. Skipping along rooftops and ledges, she also packs a mean range of projectile weapons, including a massive two-handed cannon with a seemingly unlimited magazine.

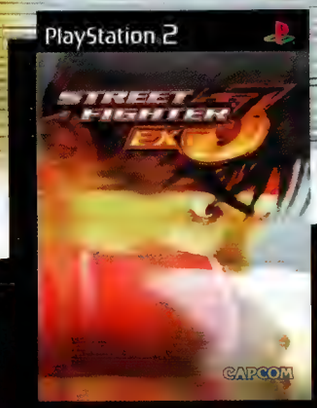
SNOW GUN: She's the mistress of long range attacks and can pick off enemy assassins.

SURVIVAL RAFTER: Hanging around is no longer the sole territory of madam Croft.

THE FIGHTING LEGEND NOW FOR PLAYSTATION® 2

STREET® FIGHTER® EX3

Capcom's legendary fighting series heralds a new generation of games in Street Fighter EX3. Awe-inspiring realism and unbelievable graphics bring the world of Street Fighter to life in this amazing tag-team free-for-all. Choose from 16 characters to play 1-on-1, 2-on-1 and even 1-on-3 battles!



PlayStation.2

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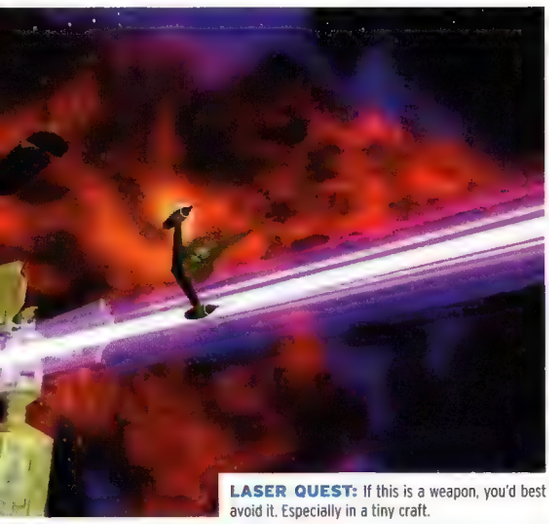
STATION WAGON: We're starting to get an idea of the diverse range of craft in the game.

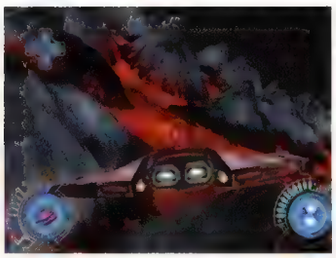
EXPECTED UK / LATE 2001

STAR WARS: STARFIGHTER

Following the extended preview in PSM2#02, we've acquired brand new shots of the sumptuous *Starfighter*. Gameplay details have at last started to emerge. The D-pad lets you command your team mates, balancing their fire-power between attacking or defending duties. Furthermore, the targeting system will allow automatic or manual selection of priorities. If the balance of tactics and instant playability can be integrated into a suitably diverse level structure, we'll be paralysed with excitement.



LASER QUEST: If this is a weapon, you'd best avoid it. Especially in a tiny craft.



HOMEWARD BOUND: We had a good look at planet detail, now we're getting more of the technology.

OVERLOAD!

A FRANTIC BURST OF FUTURE PS2

EXPECTED UK / LATE 2001

CMX 2002
FEATURING RICKY CARMICHAEL

We don't remember asking for it, but PS2's first motocross game should be a limb-jarring treat. Expect a startling physics model coupled to a broad selection of real life riders, tracks and tricks. The game maps have been generated from topographical satellite maps. So that's OK, then.

EXPECTED UK / SPRING 2001

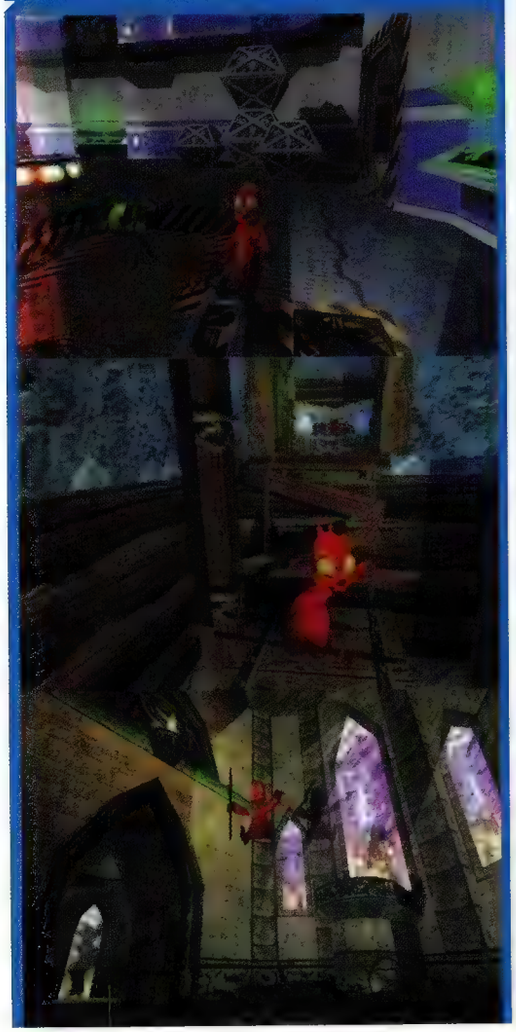
NFL GAMEDAY

Another graphically-asphyxiating American Football game packed full of those little details that only Americans could appreciate. Your quarterback can face one way, and throw the ball the other. Wow. Regardless, the hardcore arcade playability might prove a serious contender for *John Madden's* shiny helmeted crown.

EXPECTED UK / TBC

THE GIFT

Cyro have created a strange, disturbing but cheeky platform/puzzler. The storyline doesn't make a whole lot of sense at the moment, but it involves a place called Game Valley, an overweight play-tester, a Princess and seven dwarves. Right... Gift is a lazy, selfish anti-hero – purely in the rescue business for personal gain. Nothing wrong with that.

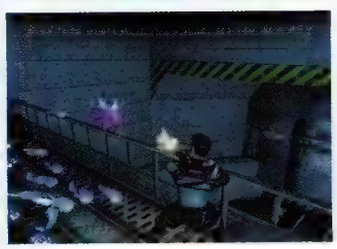


EXPECTED UK / TBC

EXTERMINATION

Coming from SCE, this could be the start of a whole new genre – the 'Panic Action' game. As well as swarms of unpleasantly slithery insects, you'll encounter parasitic wee beasties, so expect to do plenty of frantic running away from things. However, the machine guns in the early footage suggest there's a fair bit of retaliation in there too. In terms of gameplay, look forward to something akin to *Syphon Filter* crossed with John Carpenter's The Thing.

CREEPSHOW: It's enough to make you're skin crawl. More colourful than Starship Troopers, though.



COMING SOON

ONLY IN PSM2 - TOMORROW'S BIG GAMES FIRST!

NO BUTTS: The neon nightmare continues, with Square utilising light even for physical contact.

EXPECTED UK MARCH 2001

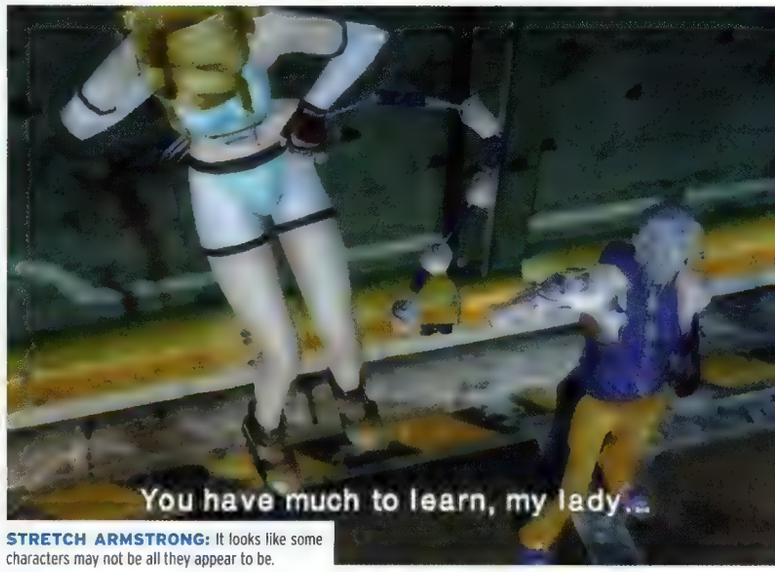
THE BOUNCER

After our initial trepidation about the gameplay aspect, shots continue to surface of some of the most vicious fighting we've yet seen. Also new to us are some of the plot developments – there's an old man who appears to be a former mentor of our heroes, but goes on to beat them up.

We're slightly less pleased about the fact that the action shifts to outer space at some point – it all looks a bit Moonraker for our liking, although low-gravity fighting would be fantastic. Look out for a massive update on *The Bouncer's* progress in the next issue of PSM2.

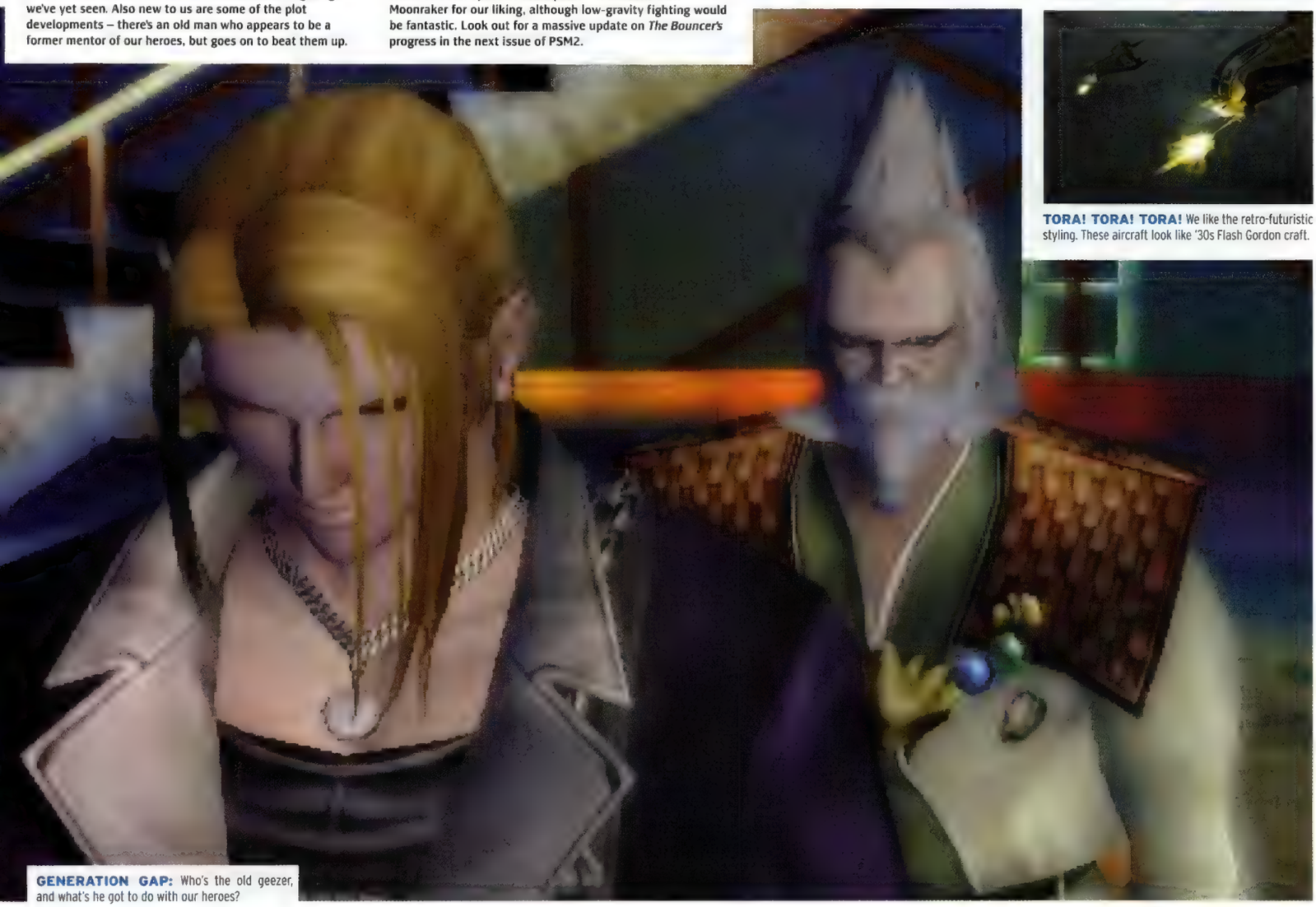
FOOT IN THE JAW: Sion gets the drop on a uniformed drone...

SOMER-ASSAULT: ...flips himself over and nails the chap hiding by the wall.



STRETCH ARMSTRONG: It looks like some characters may not be all they appear to be.

TORA! TORA! TORA! We like the retro-futuristic styling. These aircraft look like '30s Flash Gordon craft.

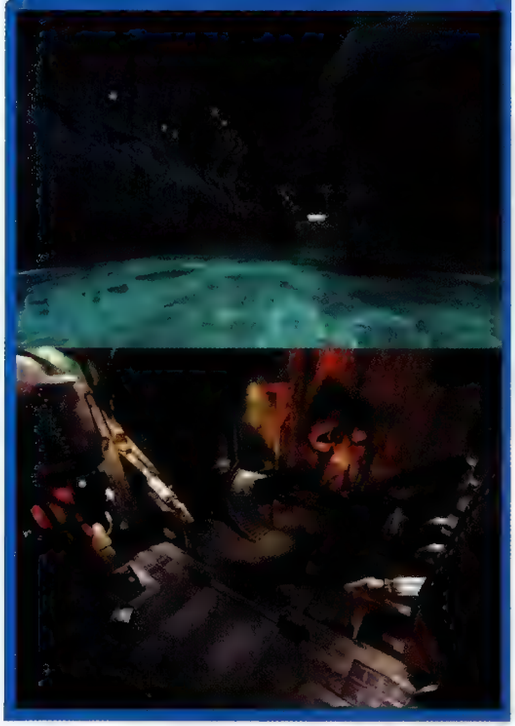


GENERATION GAP: Who's the old geezer, and what's he got to do with our heroes?

EXPECTED UK TBC

1906: AN ANTARCTIC ADVENTURE

The Alone in the Dark team voyage into Jules Verne territory. Gameplay details are scarce but you'll be piloting retro sci-fi vehicles into the chilly recesses of the South Pole. Prepare for a gripping action adventure with dramatic plot twists aplenty.



ETERNAL BLADE

RPG action with all the usual axe-wielding berserkers, goblins and mysterious females you'd expect

PORTAL RUNNER

Starring attractive reporter Vikki Grimm, from *Sarge's Heroes*, who shoots arrows and rides lions. Why?

AGE OF EMPIRES 2

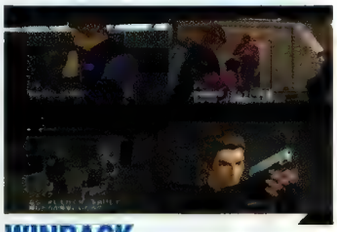
The PC's successful historical battle-em-up bounds onto PS2. Expect a real-time strategy treat.

SIDEWINDER MAX

Confer with your wingman, fly in teams of four and blow everyone else out of the sky. Ripping.

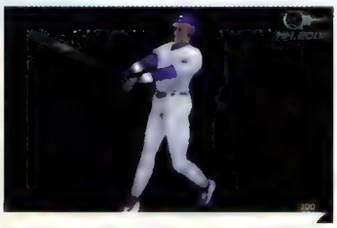
WDL: WAR JETZ

Another in the upcoming *World Destruction League* series, only this time with fighter jets... sorry, jetz.



WINBACK

The N64's poor man's *Metal Gear Solid* might surprise on PS2. The AI looks promising, though.



HIGH HEAT BASEBALL 2002

Lots of glitches in the early version, but this'll still be a faithful translation of the noble sport of baseball.

COMING NEXT ISSUE...

MORE THRILLING NEW TITLES FROM THE WORLD OF PS2

There are so many new games in development for PlayStation 2, it can be a nightmare trying to keep track of them all. Well, don't worry – let PSM2 do that for you. Next month we'll bring you all the details of the big games heading to PS2 in 2001. The anticipated sequels and the surprising newcomers. You can't afford to miss out...

PLUS:

- *Project Eden* – We bring you the first PS2 shots and latest development details.
- *Gun Griffon Blaze* – Stick you mech out for this superior 'bot battler
- *Shadow Man 2* – He's back, and promising something special for PS2.
- *Kengo* – More samurai conflict in this third-person slash-fest.

COMPETITION

CALL AND WIN GREAT PRIZES!

WIN a Laptop Computer
0906 960 3301

WIN Buffy - Season 3 (EPISODES 12-22)
0906 960 3302

0906 960 3303
WIN a Box of Pokémon Trading cards and Watches

WIN a dreamcast console
0906 960 3304

0906 960 3305
WIN a City Scooter

WIN WWF Collector Cards, T-Shirts & Posters
0905 960 3306

WIN a mobile phone
no bills, no worries - just pay as you go!
0905 960 3307

WIN a midi hi-fi with remote control
0906 960 3308

WIN a Pocket TV
0906 960 3309

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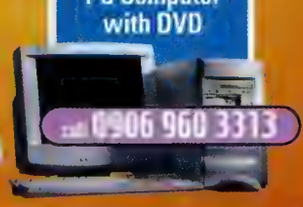
WIN a combination portable text TELEVIDEO

WIN WWF Video Series Volume IV selection
0906 960 3311

WIN a nintendo 64 plus 3 top games
0906 960 3312

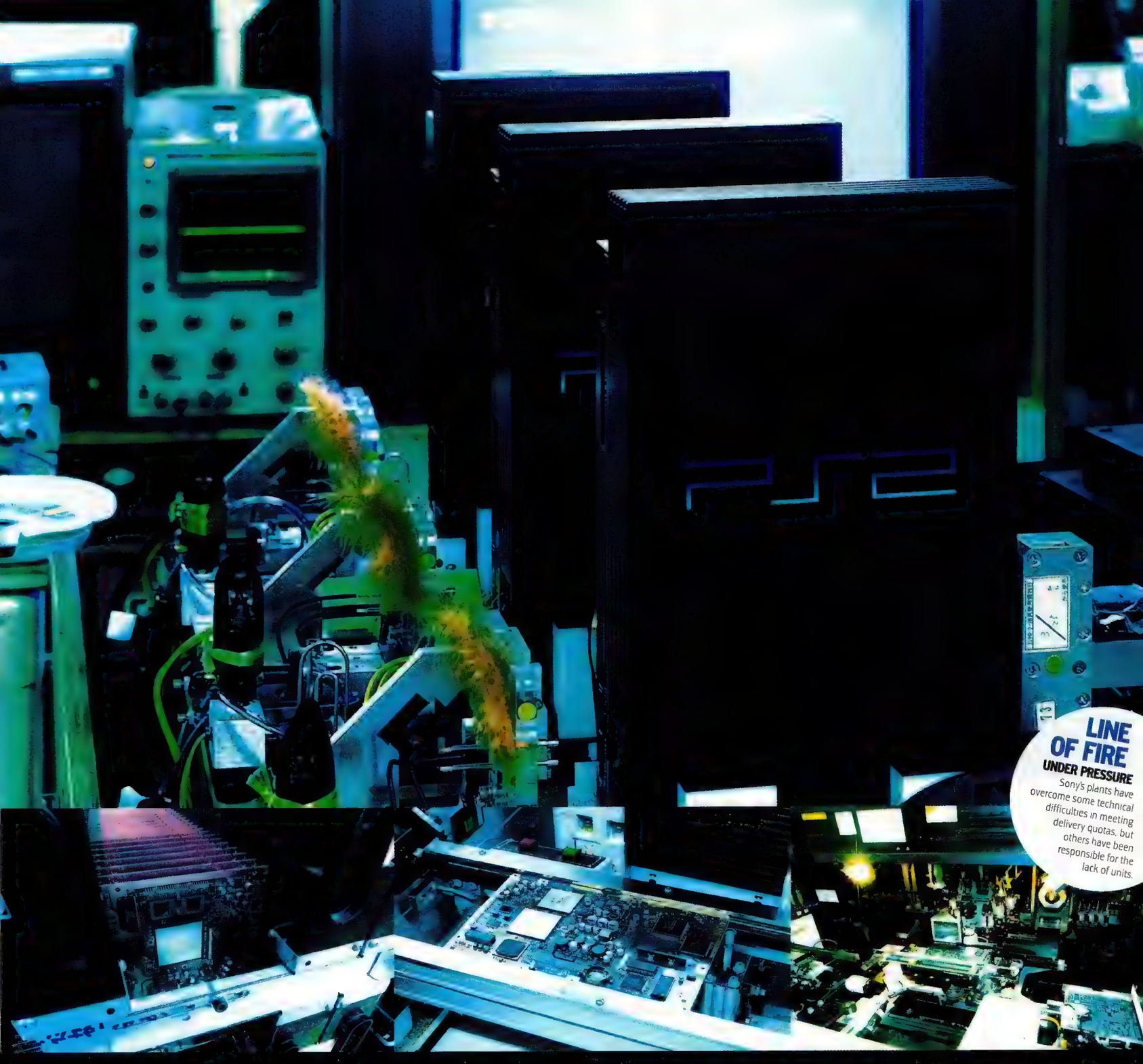


WIN a PC Computer with DVD
0906 960 3313

GUESS WHO
WIN a Playstation 2 plus 3 Games
0906 960 3314

PS2

Want to know more about your PS2? Each month we'll be dipping into the post-



LINE OF FIRE

UNDER PRESSURE

Sony's plants have overcome some technical difficulties in meeting delivery quotas, but others have been responsible for the lack of units.

FAQ

bag to answer your knottiest questions. Got a problem? Get involved.

CAN I CHIP MY PS2?

Not yet you can't, but we can safely say that someone somewhere is figuring a way to do it right now. Similarly, some unscrupulous soul is working out a way of playing foreign import games on your PS2 too.

CAN I PLAY REGION 1 DVDS ON MY PAL PS2?

Quick answer: no, you can't. For those of you that are new to the world of DVD, each is coded with a Region number. Discs can only be played on a machine with the same Region number: 1) USA and Canada, 2) Western Europe, Japan and South Africa, 3) South East Asia, 4) Australia and South America, 5) Russia, Eastern Europe and Africa and 6) China. So, if you bought a disc on holiday in Russia it won't play on your UK DVD machine. The idea is that you can't buy DVDs in the States (for example) of films which are still in the cinemas in the UK. The solution is for the film companies to release all movies all over the world at the same time but, hey, they know best... Your PS2 is – unlike certain sneaky or 'chipped' DVD players – Region coded to the hilt. There was some confusion surrounding PS2's adherence to the law after an easy button-push cheat was discovered that allowed you to play US (Region 1) discs on the Japanese (Region 2) machines, but this was quickly removed. In the UK you've got official Region 2 discs or nothing. If we stumble across a cheat we'll let you know.

WILL IT PLAY ALL MY DVD DISC'S EXTRAS?

Everything your living room DVD player can do, PS2 can do. The only drawback is operating the thing with the joypad (rather than having a nice wireless remote – but these are available separately), and the PS2's menu accessing on-screen, er... menu, is a bit tiny and confusing, but other than that the machine works every time and the results are totally outstanding.

WHEN WILL I BE ABLE TO RECORD ON MY PS2?

Whoa there, big fella! As for when you'll be able to record on a PS2 DVD disc... the answer is never. Writeable DVD and the new DVD RAM standards require a different type of laser and drive than the one currently fitted in your PS2. Will Sony offer the opportunity to bring it in for a writeable refit? We don't think so. The only way you'll be able to record to your PS2 will be via the Hard-Drive and Broadband add-on device which we probably won't see until 2002. It'll be worth the wait, as not only will you be able to surf the net at top speed, but you can also download movies and music too. In the meantime expect lots of little image-editing and video camera gadgets to take advantage of the PS2's USB ports, allowing you to store small quantities of stuff like pics and sound snippets on the 8MB PS2 Memory Card.

CAN I PLAY THE MULTI-MEDIA MUSIC FILES SOMETIMES HIDDEN ON MUSIC CDS? YOU KNOW, THE VIDEOS AND STUFF?

No, you can't. Rather like some of the extra features on DVDs included for those playing from a PC, the PS2 doesn't support (or rather hasn't the right bits to support) such content. It's all because such stuff is done with PC code and your PS2 isn't a PC, and it doesn't want to be either.

CAN I JUST PLUG IN A KEYBOARD AND MOUSE?

Yeah, sure you can plug it in – but it won't work. Those USB ports look mighty tempting, and they crop up on all sorts of gadgets these days, but don't go thinking that if you connect two devices with the same socket they'll work together. A videocassette fits neatly into a toaster but you don't expect that to work do you? In order for devices to work with PS2 they'll have to come with a disc containing the code to drive it. The problem is that currently there is only one device – an expensive Sony still-video camera – that comes with a stripped-down PS2 version of its PC software, and this is a free extra on a PC camera rather than the camera being a proper dedicated PS2 add-on. The much talked-about glut of modems, keyboards etc have yet to materialise, but once Broadband takes off there'll be hundreds of the things.

CAN I GET ON THE INTERNET?

Once and for all – no. There's no modem, no network, no multi-player, e-mail, chat services or anything with PS2. Just think of it as being a games machine that can play DVDs – and that's it. The Broadband multi-connectional future is bright for PS2, but that's all years away...

WILL I NEED A HARD-DRIVE?

Once the Hard Drive and Broadband add-on becomes available in the UK it'll be so good you won't be able to resist getting one. Which is a good thing as, at the present, it's looking like its going to cost about £200 minimum.

WILL I NEED A NEW MEMORY CARD?

Yes – if you want to save your PS2 games. While the old, grey PSone cards will work just fine for resuming your PSone games (should you be playing them on your PS2) and saving your progress, anything PS2 related will require a PS2 card. That is you can only save PS2 data on PS2 8MB black cards.

CAN I PLUG IN PC PERIPHERALS, SUCH AS STEERING WHEELS FOR EXAMPLE?

See our point about keyboards and mice. There'll be steering wheels, light guns and a host of other whizzy peripherals, but they'll have to be specially configured to work with PS2 (and the games will need to support their features). Unfortunately, they'll probably bypass the USB ports in favour of the trusty joypad socket.

WHAT IS MAGICGATE?

MagicGate is a new data encryption and compression routine worked out by Sony for use with their MemoryStick data storage cards. These cards are used in their range of digital cameras, camcorders and computers. They're like longer, thinner memory cards really, but with much greater storage capacity – the largest currently offering 64MB. The PS2 8MB Memory Card, while shaped the same as the standard PSone card, uses MagicGate to hold more data in a more secure format and at greater transfer speeds.

CAN I TRANSFER GAME SAVES FROM MY OLD MEMORY CARDS?

Data is freely bouncable via the PS2's two ports, but PSone and PS2 data can't mix. So use a PSone card for your PSone games and a PS2 card for your PS2 games.

WILL THERE BE THIRD-PARTY MADE MEMORY CARDS AVAILABLE?

You betcha. You can expect all the third-party card and add-on makers to be putting the finishing touches to their cheaper (and probably larger capacity) unofficial cards right now.

WILL THE HARD-DRIVE RENDER MY MEMORY CARDS OBSOLETE?

More than likely. With the ability to save your games, record TV programs, and download movies and music it may make your video and PC obsolete too...

WILL MY OLD DUALSHOCK CONTROLLERS WORK WITH PS2 GAMES?

Yes they'll work just fine. The internal workings (including the DualShock jolty bits) are identical, apart from the pressure-sensitive buttons which the original DualShock controller lacks. However, there aren't really any pressure-sensitive games yet...

WILL THE PS2 MULTITAP WORK ON PSONE GAMES?

Yes, if you play them on your PS2. The PS2 MultiTap 2 won't work with PSone – likewise a PSone MultiTap doesn't work with PS2. The solution is to scrap your PSone and just play everything on your PS2 from now on. Easy.

HOW DIFFERENT IS MULTITAP 2 FROM THE ORIGINAL PSONE MULTITAP?

Only Sony's technical people know for sure, but the 'Tap now appears to support more Memory Card functions. Keen observes will have noticed that the original 'Tap only connected to the PSone via the joypad port – in fact a bar on the top of the connector plug prevented the connecting of a Memory Card to the console by squeezing it out. And yet the PSone MultiTap featured four card ports above the joypad slots – so how was it saving games? We can't recall saving a multi-player game mid-battle. Were these ports duds? The new PS2 MultiTap 2 comes with a dual-pronged socket which connects to the pad port and card slot both at once, allowing multi-player games to be saved via the four card slots above the pad ports. Curious...

WHAT IS SCART?

Rather than feed your TV an aerial signal (which requires the tuner to decode all the image and sound into a visible and audible form) a SCART socket feeds it as a much more pure, and separate, set of signals – the colour picture being made up of red, green and blue images. Via an RGB SCART lead (red, green, blue, geddit?) of the type you get free with your PS2, your TV gets separate red, green and blue images via three of the 21pins available on the socket. Another two pins are used for the left channel of sound and the other for the right channel of sound. It's like its using your TV as a computer monitor rather than just being another 'TV channel' to tune in to. By keeping everything separate the image and sound quality is vastly improved.

DO I NEED TO BUY A SCART CONNECTION?

Good news: you don't need to buy one because you get one in the box this time around. Seems that there're finally enough SCART compatible TVs in Britain for Sony to include this higher quality connection in-pack without out-of-date RF users kicking up a stink. If you are cursed with an old non-SCART TV (it doesn't have the distinctive box-like 21pin socket on the back) then you can buy an RF (aerial) lead separately, or just use the one you got with your PSone. It'll work fine. Or alternatively you should buy a new TV...

SENSITIVE TYPE: The DualShock 2 controller is still to have the full weight of all developers thrown into the use of its pressure-sensitive buttons.

WHAT'S i-LINK?

i-Link is Sony's version of the new international standard for zapping digital data between devices. Just as USB is the standard for peripheral connections (and PS2 has two ports), i-Link is the standard for talking to other computers or machines (and PS2 has a port on the front). Despite being a standard however, it goes by three names: Sony call it i-Link, Apple (the makers of the iMac) call it Firewire and the actual standard is called IEE 1334. They're all exactly the same thing however, with a tiny square digital connection socket.

At some time in the future you'll be using the i-Link port (and cable) to fire images and sound into your PS2 from your camcorder and digital audio machine. For now though, this is the port you'll be using to connect together PS2s to play full-screen link-up games. This was a feature built into early PlayStations but was dropped from PSone to save money and also because of a lack of developer support. Apparently, programming a faultless link-up mode into PSone games was a testing nightmare, so no-one bothered. The mech blast-em-up *Armored Core 2* is the first game to offer a link-up using the i-Link port and *Gran Turismo 3* is another. We can't wait...

WILL ALL THE GAMES BE ANALOGUE SENSITIVE?

Much has been made of the DualShock 2's Analogue capabilities. That is, every button except for the START and SELECT buttons is pressure-sensitive. The PS2 can read anything from not pressing the button (which gives a reading of zero) to hitting (or squeezing) the button really hard (which gives a reading of 255) and anything in between. So now you can squeeze the buttons harder to apply more gas or more brake. Clever eh? But there are very few games that support it. The biggest will be *Gran Turismo 3* which will use the buttons for accelerate and brake, and there's currently a pool game in Japan that uses button pressure to set the strength of the shot. And that's about it. It appears that programmers are reticent to use the new feature for fear of gamers worrying about not only which buttons they're hitting but *how hard* they are doing it too. Electronic Arts' *Formula 1* game for example was to use the feature, but testers complained that their thumbs were being knackered by having to hold the button down hard enough to ensure they were going top speed. Time will tell if more games take up Sony's pressure-sensitive offer.

WILL I NEED ANOTHER PERIPHERAL TO USE IT?

No, just an i-Link cable which has identical sockets on both ends. These are already available from a number of manufacturers, including Sony, as they're already used for posh video and audio connections.

WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN PAL AND NTSC?

PAL, the UK TV system, uses 625 lines horizontally across the screen to make up its image. The rougher and readier NTSC system, used in Japan and America only has 525 lines. The result is that we have sharper TV pictures than them – result! However, as most games are developed by Japanese and Americans *for* Japanese and Americans (though this is changing) they usually exist in 525 line NTSC format first. The result is that when they appear on a PAL TV you get the 525 line image in the centre of the screen with 50 lines blank at the top and bottom. These appear as ugly black bars.

The solution is to re-code the game with more lines. Often this doesn't happen though. The original *Ridge Racer* on PSone looks like you're playing through a letterbox – and *Ridge 5* on PS2 isn't much better. Usually some more lines are added to the image (reducing the size of the border to barely noticeable levels) and occasionally – *Metal Gear Solid* is a good case – you get a full-screen 625 line version of the game which looks visibly sharper than the 525 Japanese and American versions.

Tekken Tag Tournament also gets a good PAL conversion – while there're still borders, they're pretty tiny and you can see the extra detail in the form of a smoother image with less jaggies, particularly in a PAL/NTSC side-by-side comparison.

WHAT'S ALL THIS 50HZ AND 60HZ STUFF?

This goes hand in hand with the PAL/NTSC stuff. Basically, American and Japanese TVs refresh the screen 60 times-a-second (60Hz) while UK TVs only do it 50 times-a-second (50Hz). This means that American and Japanese games redraw the image 60 times a second (one per screen update). This also means that American and Japanese games run *faster* as your car or game character has moved 60 bits of the game forward per second as opposed to just 50 in the UK. This manifests itself as American games being 17.5% faster than UK games.

However, the 50Hz update is locked within the RF system (aerial system) used in the UK. By using a SCART socket you can update the screen 60 times-a-second. Most TVs work like this these days, as they are built in Japan and then exported. These multi-synch TVs can cope with whatever screen update speed you throw at them. However, in order to guarantee compatibility with all UK TVs, up until now consoles have all updated at the slower 50Hz speed.

The good news is that the adoption of the SCART input as the PS2 standard means that games can be 60Hz or 50Hz, depending on whether the game makers decide to include a 60Hz version. While early software is only on the disc in 50z form, we're told that later games (*Gran Turismo 3* and so on) will offer a 60Hz update option for those blessed with SCART multi-synch TVs, which will mean most of us. A happy ending then. Eventually. **PSM2**

SYNTHESISER POP: Check the story in Global (pg12) for the latest on the Graphics Synthesiser chip.

GODESI-SAN: Co-creator of the PS2.

BEST BEFORE SEE BOTTOM

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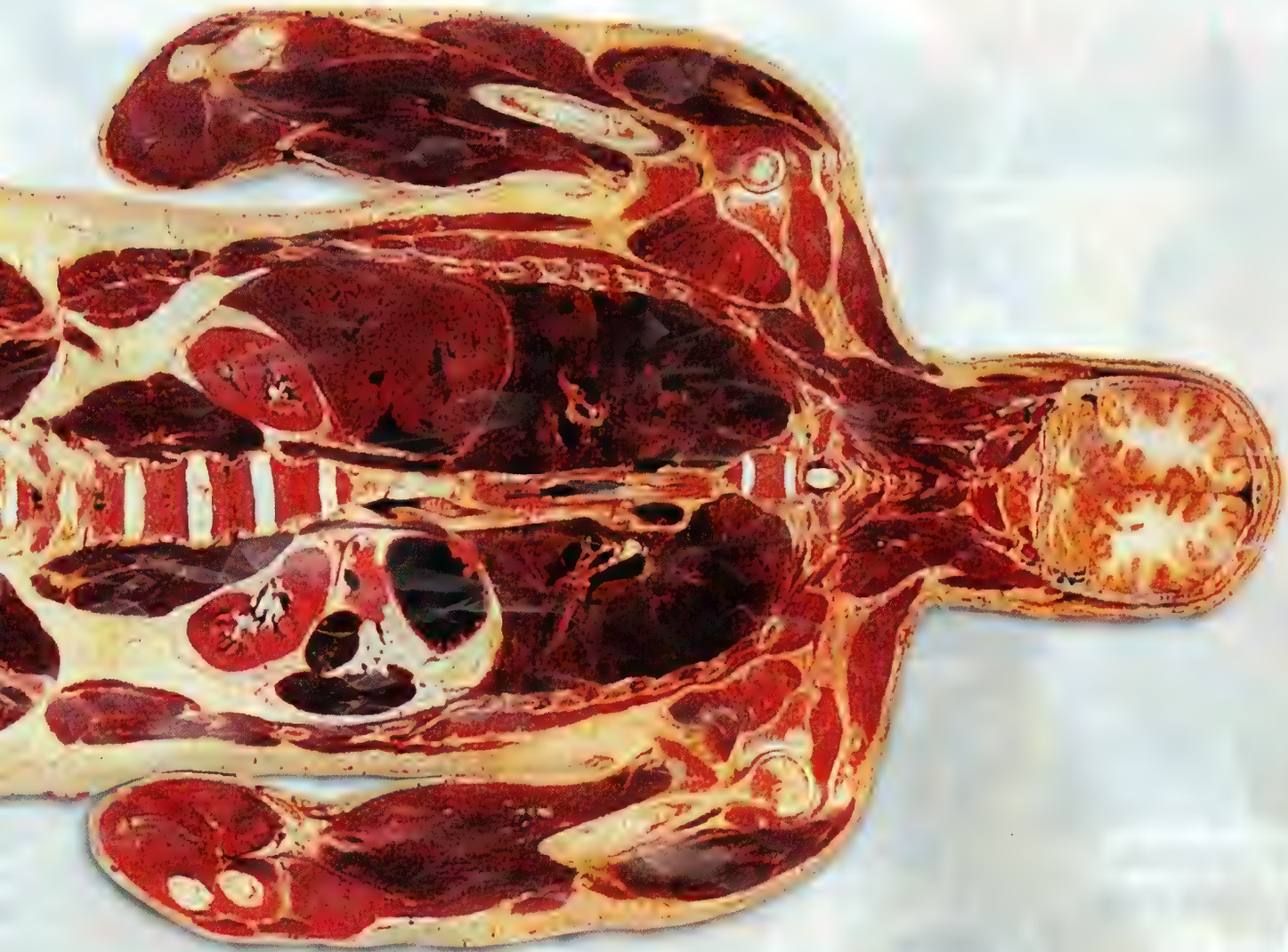
PlayStation



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YOU ARE FOOD

PLAYSTATION 2 MAGAZINE
PSM2

REVIEWS

THE ESSENTIAL VERDICT ON EVERY NEW RELEASE

BOXING, DRIVING, SKATING, JUMPING. WELCOME SPORTS FANS, ONE AND ALL.

Got yourself a PlayStation 2? Then you'll be needing us to point you in the right direction when it comes to the titles you'll fall in love with, and those you'd rather dig out of your sole with a pointy stick.

So for this, our PS2 launch issue, we've lined up a hot selection designed to tickle your adrenal glands and keep those pulse rates high. Not only do we have *Ready 2 Rumble: Round 2*, *ESPN Track & Field* and *ESPN Winter X Games* we've also given all those PAL launch titles another once over just to keep you completely up to date. **PSM2**

If you feel a PSM2 review is unfair, treated a game harshly or praised it too much, then let me know. Send an e-mail to psm2@futurenet.co.uk.

REVIEWERS

PLAYING PS2 LONGER, HARDER, FASTER THIS ISSUE:

The world's most knowledgeable and outspoken PlayStation 2 fans

DANIEL DAWKINS

- **SPECIALIST IN:** Sports, RPGs, Shooting
- **HAVING FUN WITH:** SSX, ISS and FIFA

We've finally found something to distract Dan's attention from *SSX* long enough for the nurses to give him that much needed bed bath

JOEL SNAPE

- **SPECIALIST IN:** Fighting, Shooting
- **HAVING FUN WITH:** SSX, TimeSplitters

The Snape's gone gun crazy. We found him staring out of one of the office windows mumbling something it being a 'suitable' sniper position.

DUNCAN BAIZLEY

- **SPECIALIST IN:** Shooting, Sports
- **HAVING FUN WITH:** ESPN International Track & Field

Dr Baizley, who has become known as 'The Man' round the office, has clocked up a few Golds this issue. You'd better watch your back Henry Kelly.

JONATHAN BRYANT

- **SPECIALIST IN:** Strategy, Mech Battle
- **HAVING FUN WITH:** Ring of Red, Super Bust-A-Move

"You see this is your targeting menu, and this... is where you control your ground troops." Jonnie – there's a world out there just waiting for you, mate.

ANDY DYER

- **SPECIALIST IN:** RPGs, Platform,
- **HAVING FUN WITH:** Driver 2

We realised that Andy was taking the whole *Driver* thing far too seriously because you can't get near to him without him running away. Weird.

MARCUS HAWKINS

- **SPECIALIST IN:** Driving, Shooting
- **HAVING FUN WITH:** Moto GP, TimeSplitters

Marcus was so taken by the scenes outside Metreon in San Francisco that he decided to head out there himself. Now there's dedication for you...

DAN JOLIN

- **SPECIALIST IN:** DVD movies, Internet
- **HAVING FUN WITH:** Russel Crow, Oliver Reed

Our very own Maximus polishes his buckler and prepares for another mammoth battle with the latest beasts from the DVD pit.

MAIL US NOW!

E-MAIL: PSM2@FUTURENET.CO.UK

Have YOU got yourself an import PlayStation 2 and fancy writing a short, informative review for PSM2? Found a pre-ordering bargain for the UK PS2 that the whole country should know about? What do you think about the PS2 games so far? Got any dirt on the review crew above? Share the wealth and mail us now!

›UNRIVALLED INFORMATION フハウヌキニラ

WHY PSM2 REVIEWS ARE THE BEST YOU'LL READ!

We love games, but won't resist caving a shabby game's face in – stick with PSM2 to get the best buying advice around.

BEST SCREENS:
We've captured the most dynamic images from the games, with all the levels and views you need to see. They're the best shots you'll clap eyes on!

PASSIONATE OPINION:
PSM2 reviewers squeeze every ounce of detail out of a game, and tell you everything you need to know. Our reviews are as entertaining to read as the best games are to play.

IMPACT POINT:
Here you'll see the defining moment in the game that convinced your PSM2 reviewer that this is a shiny blue disc you should run out and buy or just leave on the shelf.

REVIEWS
FANTAVISION
Whack on the kettle, break open the Digestives, and prepare for the world's most spectacular fireworks night. No pomp, no ceremony, no snazzy texture-mapping. *Fantavision* is the PlayStation 2's simplest, and arguably greatest, invention yet
"EVEN WHEN THE GAME INEVITABLY FRUSTRATES AND BEATS YOU, IT'S NOT BECAUSE YOU'RE STUCK, BUT THAT YOU HAVEN'T REACTED QUICKLY ENOUGH"
INSIGHT
BEATING THE GAME
GAMER'S CHOICE
VERDICT
85

VERDICT BOX:
A chunky, comprehensive summary of the game. You'll find out what the best and worst features of the gameplay, graphics, sound and lifespan are, as well as getting a score out of 100. We feel this is the most useful way of indicating the game's quality, rather than some oddball score out of, say, 30.

INSIGHT:
Here you'll find amazing facts about the game and its developers, carefully selected by the PSM2 reviewer to give you a deeper understanding of the title. Or make you laugh.

GAMER'S CHOICE:
Your essential guide to how the game compares to others in its genre. These will be PS2 games where possible, but due to the system's ability to play all your old PlayStation discs we'll also compare the new games with the classics...

ALL THE INFO YOU NEED:
Crammed with every useful fact about the game, you'll find everything here – from how many players it supports to how many levels and playing modes you can expect. For Japanese discs, we'll also give you a guide to how impenetrable the text is. Neat, no?

›HONEST AND ACCURATE シフモカ

PS2 REVIEWS

We review every last PS2 title from around the world. Each review is clearly marked with its country of origin. Until issue three all reviews will be of Japanese releases.

›HONEST AND ACCURATE シフモカ

DVD REVIEWS

Every month PSM2 teams up with *Total Film* magazine to review the best of the month's DVDs. We treat extras as a bonus and base our scores largely on the film's quality.

›HONEST AND ACCURATE シフモカ

PSone REVIEWS

We select the cream of the crop of new UK PSone releases. In this backward compatible world, PSM2 is also your guide to the AAA games on the machine that won't die!

›HARD-HITTING シフモカ キハクキア

THE PSM2 SCORING SYSTEM:

PSM2 WARNING!

0-29 Shoddy stuff. A game in this category is so bad, *well*, it's just laughable really...

30-49 Possibly fun in the short term, but there are some serious faults in the game's design.

50-69 50 is considered 'average' in PSM2 (unlike some other mags). You can trust our scores.

70-84 An entertaining game that *just* misses out on being something big. Highly enjoyable, though.

85-89 What are you waiting for? If a game gets a score in this category, you really ought to treat yourself. You won't be disappointed – PSM2 highly recommends it, and that's the only endorsement you need...

90+ An unmissable gem which should feature in the game collection of everyone reading PSM2. It's a supreme example of its genre and pushes your PlayStation 2 in every respect. You must play this.

DON'T MISS THESE:

PS2 REVIEWS

READY 2 RUMBLE: ROUND 2 064
Meaty, beefy, big and bouncy. Punch drunk madness touches down on PlayStation 2 ...

MADDEN NFL 2001 070
Will this go the distance? Or will we sack it before first down. Flip those pages and find out.

Top Gear Daredevil 074
ESPN International Track & Field 076
ESPN Winter X Games 080
NHL 2001 082
Super Bust-A-Move 084
AquaAqua: Wetrix 2.0 085
Orphen 087
RC Revenge Pro 088
Tekken Tag Tournament 091
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Gradius 3 & 4 092
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Fantavision 094
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Moto GP 096
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DVD REVIEWS

Gladiator 102
Toy Story Collector's Edition 103
The Perfect Storm 103
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Reservoir Dogs 103
Stuart Little 103
The Man With the Golden Gun 103
Spaghetti Western Box Set 103

PSone REVIEWS

Crash Bash 106
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Dino Crisis 2 107
The World is Not Enough 107
Chicken Run 107
Bugs & Taz Time Busters 107
Knockout Kings 2001 107

OUT UK NOW

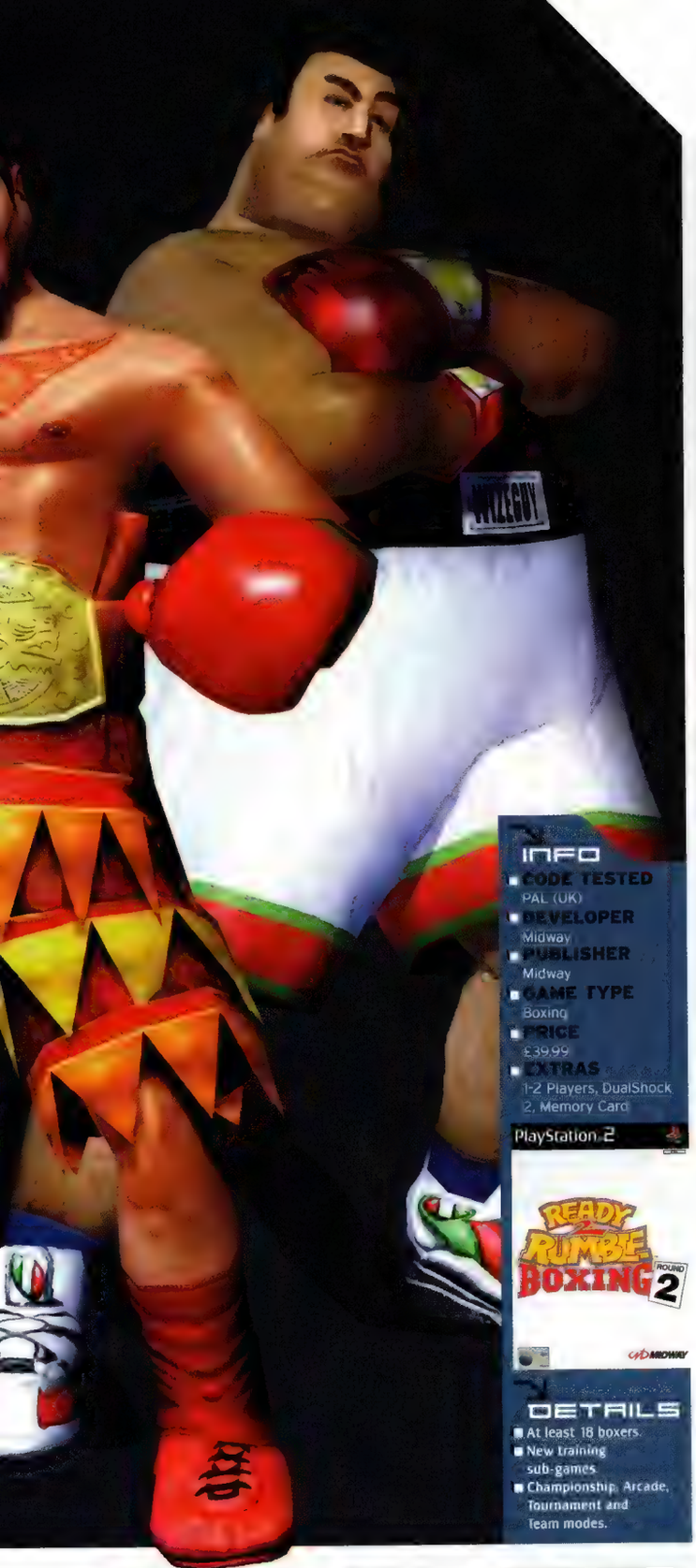
READY 2

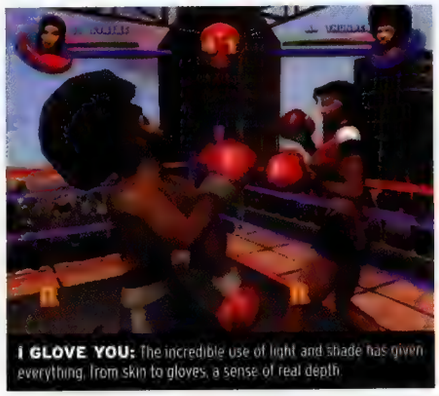
"WHEN YOU THINK OF THE EMOTION ENGINE, YOU THINK RAGE, PAIN AND

READY 2 RUMBLE: ROUND 2

Big hair, huge upper-cuts and more bruises than a bag of bullied fruit. Seconds out, lights out and... jab, duck, strike a pose! **REVIEWER:** Joel Snape

Like it or not, boxing isn't what it used to be. In the '60s, it was mixed with politics, religion and racial tension, leaving giants like Foreman and Ali almost battling for the soul of the USA. Now, it's a spectacle more than anything else, with fireworks, amateur dramatics and one-round knockdowns that seem uncannily tailored to the MTV generation's attention span. Which is why it's hard to complain about *Rumble 2*'s sense of humour – one day, all boxing might be like this.





I GLOVE YOU: The incredible use of light and shade has given everything, from skin to gloves, a sense of real depth.

When you think of the Emotion Engine, the emotions that spring to mind are rage, pain, and tearful regret – mostly thanks to Hideo Kojima – but here it provokes nothing more distressing than snorts of laughter. The original game's graphics have been subtly, but effectively, enhanced – new hair and fabric animations make all the in-game physics nice and solid, while the screeches, jibes and hoots of the fighters add to the generally light-hearted atmosphere. The vastly improved collision detection, and newly implemented vertex shading used on the fighter's skin, means that while the action might appear outlandish, the blows seem very real. There's a keen attention to detail – sweat flies from a vicious punch, 'Wild' Stubby Corsley's spurs jangle as he walks and the ropes tremble as the ailing combatants lurch into them. After taking facial damage that would make Tyler Durden wince, the fighters stumble about dazed for a few seconds before they fall over. Watching them stagger back for another go's like the worst Rocky sequel in the world – it's too comical to be really upsetting, but feels unbearably poignant at the same time.

"IT'S HARD TO COMPLAIN ABOUT READY 2 RUMBLE: ROUND 2'S SENSE OF HUMOUR – ONE DAY ALL BOXING MIGHT BE LIKE THIS"

INSIGHT

- The phrase 'Let's Get Ready To Rumble' is a registered trademark of shouty-loud commentator Michael Buffer, who makes an appearance in the game. As well as appearing in the Simpsons and South Park, he's released a CD of his yellings, titled Jock Jams. He's estimated to be familiar to over 25,000,000 Germans – a third of the country's population.

Rather than the swearing that normally pervades the PSM2 office during versus games, everyone gets into the spirit of things when playing *Rumble 2*, with banter that verges on the lyrical – which, bearing in mind that we're not even drunk, says volumes about its multi-player appeal. One of our team picks the morbidly obese Mama Tua every time, then sits mesmerised by her gently rippling rolls of fat. Another can't help but emulate the high-pitched shrieking and air-popping punches of Jet 'Iron' Chin, at least until he's threatened with real physical violence. And yes, no-one can resist having at least one go as smooth criminal, Michael Jackson, himself – which comes as a pleasant surprise, as he's happily sent up his shimmying on-stage persona and his face bruises just as well as the others.

Among the other new characters are Freak E. Deke, the stick-figure Canadian Punk, and crowd favourite Freedom Brock, who fights like a supernaturally-hard acid casualty and reminds you why you used to buy Freak Brothers comics. Also making his debut is Afro Thunder's brother GC, who sports a similarly elaborate coiffure and bears more than a passing resemblance to either a well-worn Prince, or a nostalgically chipper Little Richard.

The taunts are genuinely entertaining – watch out for English fop 'Big' Willy Johnson breaking out into an impromptu hoedown – and they are actually *useful* this time, bumping up your RUMBLE meter. There's something vaguely

INFO

- **CODE TESTED** PAL (UK)
- **DEVELOPER** Midway
- **PUBLISHER** Midway
- **GAME TYPE** Boxing
- **PRICE** £39.99
- **EXTRAS** 1-2 Players, DualShock 2, Memory Card

PlayStation 2

READY 2 RUMBLE BOXING ROUND 2

MIDWAY

DETAILS

- At least 18 boxers.
- New training sub-games.
- Championship, Arcade, Tournament and Team modes.

ROUND 2 RUMBLE

REGRET – BUT HERE IT PROVOKES NOTHING MORE THAN SNORTS OF LAUGHTER"

DON'T BELIEVE THE SWIPE: As you work through the game it'll become apparent that exchanging blows toe-to-toe won't win you much. Learn to dodge.

RUMBLE IN THE JUNGLE

The RUMBLE system now includes three levels of pugilistic mayhem, and to give you a chance to build it up, the meter no longer completely disappears inbetween rounds, but simply resets to the last completed level.

Get some solid body blows in, pile on a few taunts and wait until your bar's positively steaming. This is your cue to pile in with a barrage of unblockable blows and knock your opponent into the third row.

WANNA BE STARTIN' SOMETHIN': Build up RUMBLE up to the third level, and point him at his opponent.

BEAT IT: Time your unblockable RUMBLE attack to land some uppercut that sends OC thunder into the audience. Owww!

▶uncomfortable about Selene Strike's orgasmic squealing, and there's a fair smattering of characters who no-one will ever love, but that's true of any fighting game. As ever, the comedy's solidly in Farrelly brothers territory – low-brow slapstick combined with outrageous violence – but it's still funny.

Despite the comedy elements, purists won't have much to complain about. The action feels satisfyingly like 'real boxing' – listen to the sharp little breaths released by fighters when they throw jabs, or the meaty thumps accompanying a well-placed blow to the gut. Sway back as a blow whispers by, then lean in to deliver the finish in a brutally calculated flurry of gloves and teeth.

"SWAY BACK AS A BLOW WHISPERS BY, THEN LEAN IN TO DELIVER THE FINISH IN A BRUTALLY CALCULATED FLURRY OF GLOVES AND TEETH"

INSIGHT

A disclaimer at the start says: 'Certain political figures are parodied in this game... Bill and Hillary Clinton do not endorse it'. And we thought Shaq and Jacko were the only celeb fighters. Very interesting...

The most outlandish moves gel perfectly with conventional straights and crosses – though you'll find more subtle favourites, like 'Stubby' Corsley's head-tap, or Chin's contemptuous backhand slap. Thankfully, this means that the appeal of the game outlasts the comedy value of, say, seeing a very fat woman punch people.

True, on one level the action's very simplistic – even a beginner's guaranteed to stumble across a couple of special moves in his first bout, while the RUMBLE attack only ever consists of pressing two buttons together, but to complain about this is missing the point. Where *Tekken* and *DOA2* rely on memorising combos and special moves, *Rumble 2* – like real boxing – is about evading punches, gauging your range and out-thinking your opponent. Novices will play like Sonny Liston to an expert's Muhammed Ali – throwing wild punches and overreaching while their smug rival dances around the ring, floats away from harm and retaliates with effortless, devastating precision.

In terms of solo play, *Rumble 2*'s certainly challenging. The first game's Championship ladder has been made more realistic with the simple addition of a calendar – now it's necessary to decide whether you'll train or take prizefights inbetween title bouts. The training options themselves have also been enhanced – while they don't really improve the skills you'll need in the game, they're entertainingly addictive in their own right, and the ten levels of difficulty selectable

SO YOU WANNA BE A BOXER

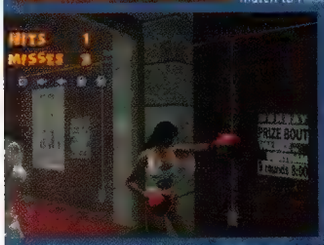
The training modes on offer put this month's *Track and Field* to shame – they're actually more fun to play, and they're only supposed to be bonus games. There's *Parappa*-style sequence-following and *Bust-A-Groove*-alike move-matching, as well as challenges to test your memory, reactions, button-hammering, timing and, um, spelling. And then there's the sway bag, which feels just like the real thing, gives you mild motion sickness and almost physically hurts when it hits you. No running up steps or pummelling frozen meat, though.

SPEED BALL: Concentrate on building a steady rhythm to build up your score.

HEAVY BAG: React to the combo instructions given and take it out on the bag.

RUMBLE PADS: Boost your score with a Rumble Pad spelling bonus. Level tests muscles.

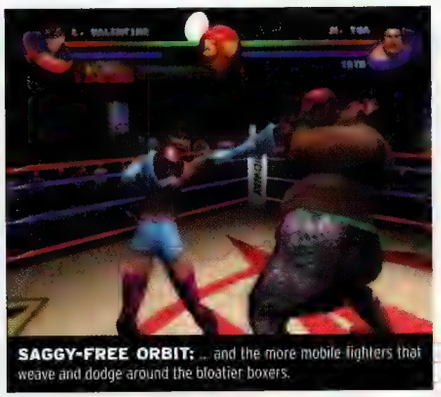
SKIPPING ROPE: Combos drop down, which you then have to match to raise your scoring bar. Definitely not just for the girls.



RUMBLE AEROBICS: Concentrate on Jo's moves, then repeat them... on her *moves*, mind.

WEIGHT LIFTING: A good strength and stamina builder, and cheaper than a course of vitamins.

SLUG TRIAL: Movement has been nicely balanced between lumbering heavyweights that hit hard and move slowly...

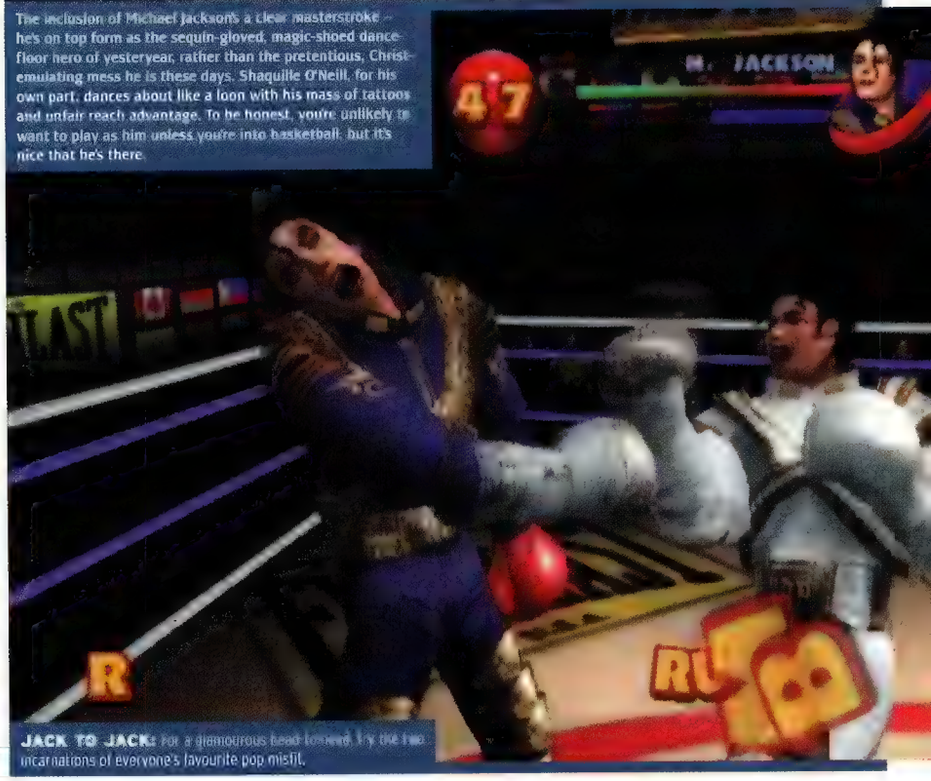


SAGGY-FREE ORBIT: ... and the more mobile fighters that weave and dodge around the bloatier boxers.

SCRAP METAL: Robox is the training automaton, and surprisingly he's not much of an opponent.

CELEBRITY DEATHMATCH

The inclusion of Michael Jackson's a clear masterstroke – he's on top form as the sequin-gloved, magic-shoed dance-floor hero of yesteryear, rather than the pretentious, Christ-emulating mess he is these days. Shaquille O'Neill, for his own part, dances about like a loon with his mass of tattoos and unfair reach advantage. To be honest, you're unlikely to want to play as him unless you're into basketball, but it's nice that he's there.



JACK TO JACK: For a glamourous head-to-head, it's the two incarnations of everyone's favourite pop misfit.

PUNCH OF GRIPES: Player's combos are indicated with fluorescent trails from the gloves. They're good for yer RUMBLE.

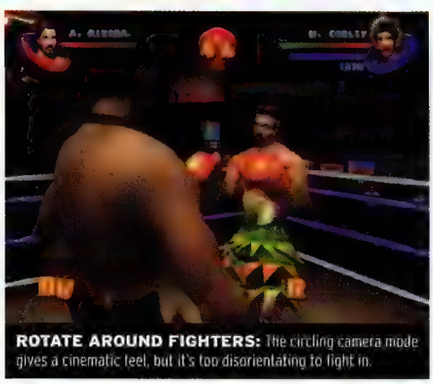
MUCUS HAWKING: You're chuckling one minute, the next you'll be wincing as a monstrous haymaker connects on a phlegm-filled yapper. Nasty.

RAGING BULL

Apart from being vastly entertaining, the taunts are now an integral part of the action. Stepping back and hurtling self-congratulatory abuse at an opponent not only builds up the all-important RUMBLE bar, but an experienced player will use them to escape from attack – Michael Jackson can moonwalk quickly away from harm, while Afro Thunder goes for the much more risky pelvic thrust.

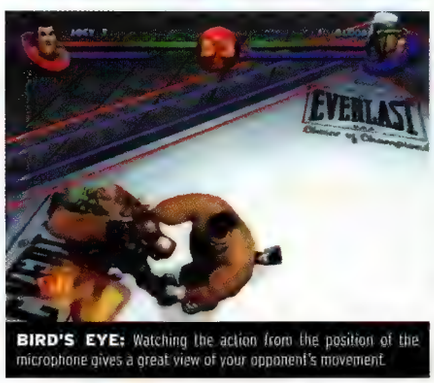
EGO BOOST: Get some distance between you and your opponent, then point out the unlikelihood of them beating you...

TAUNT-ON: ... make sure you're not close enough to receive an embarrassing smack in the mouth, though.

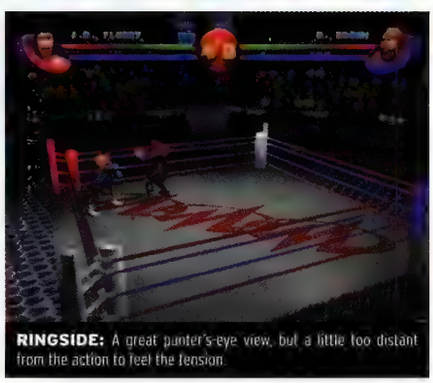


ROTATE AROUND FIGHTERS: The circling camera mode gives a cinematic feel, but it's too disorientating to fight in.

FIRST-PERSON: Good for getting the shots in and watching the lumps rise, but dodging becomes difficult to judge.



BIRD'S EYE: Watching the action from the position of the microphone gives a great view of your opponent's movement.



RINGSIDE: A great punter's-eye view, but a little too distant from the action to feel the tension.

BRUISED EGOS

The characters remain relentlessly chirpy, even after a thorough panelling – watching them celebrate a win with their eyes closed from the bruising's painful enough, but hearing them claim that they can still fight just before their legs give out is almost too painful to bear.

STRENGTH OF THE POUND: The shiners come up beautifully after a concerted beating.

MARK OF A MAN: Afro Thunder refuses to go down without one last effort at swinging a punch.

LE FREAK, C'EST CHIC: Tiny Freak E. Deke dishes out some unlikely pastings to the heavyweights.

▶on each keeps the challenge up. Also, while it's possible to win your first few fights against the computer by shamelessly poking at the jab buttons, they'll quickly start to cover up, slip punches and learn all your favoured combos, the sly dogs.

The only problem is, after you've played it against another human, you'll never feel the same elation pummelling a soulless machine. The first time you yell one of the game's many quotable lines and then realise you're sitting alone in a darkened room, you'll feel vaguely embarrassed. Enjoyable as it is, the Training mode never quite sits properly with the rest of the game – the arcade action's too fast-paced and reliant on skill (no bad thing) to feel like you're significantly improving your chances with a carefully selected regime. Also, the whole structure of the Championship mode seems a bit contrived – you're reduced to slugging your way through the rankings one fighter at a time, which gets a bit tedious. Why not have a challenge system allowing you to go after absurdly high-ranked fighters and rely on your ability alone to save you from a pasting, as seen in *Victory Boxing*?

WILD, WILD PASTING: "Wild" Stubbly Corsley has a nice line in John Wayne-esque skull smashes.

While there's enough variation between the characters to make mastering several a possibility, you're unlikely to want to play through an entire career more than once.

If you want a beat-em-up that you'll play alone for months on end, get *Tekken*. If you want a pure boxing game with licensed fighters and realistic action, you're going to have to hang on for *Knockout Kings 2001*. But if you want anything else, consider getting *Ready 2 Rumble: Round 2*. It's a two-player game that'll keep you and your mates entertained during a late night session. It's a fighting game that even people unfamiliar with the genre will crowd around. Most importantly, though, it's a boxing game that captures the spirit of the fight game, but concentrates on being a heap of fun. **PSM2**

Put the steaks in the fridge to reduce that nasty swelling – R2R:R2's ready for launch…

IMPACT POINT

"No, no, don't get up… I don't want to hurt you any more." But, of course, your jesting only persuades your opponent that all they need is to connect a lucky punch to turn the fight – they stagger back to their feet, only to be knocked clean over the ropes with a ferocious uppercut. Hoo-hooo! How's that for impact?

ONE-PUNCH MICKEY'S CHOICE

1 **READY 2 RUMBLE: ROUND 2**
Fast, brash and confident, like all the best boxers.

2 **KNOCKOUT KINGS 2000**
The thinking man's boxing game, with the likes of Lewis and Holyfield included for the purists.

3 **VICTORY BOXING 2**
Strategic action with a training element that actually works alongside the game.

PSM2 VERDICT

GAMEPLAY
+ Improved combos and counters make for satisfying scuffles.
- Still not as deep as more conventional beat-em-ups.

GRAPHICS
+ Vastly improved, with incredible textures and physics.
- Still occasional collision glitches.

SOUND
+ Meaty thudding. Comical taunts.
- Selene Strike's porn star squeals might embarrass yer Dad.

LIFESPAN
+ Endlessly playable against another person…
- …but markedly less so on your own.

OVERALL
Anything that looks this good *and* makes you laugh, demands attention. The two-player's fantastic, but the one-player lacks depth.

86

THRILLA

BIG BROTHER
Afro Thunder remains the undisputed Champion in *Round 2*.

AT THE DIVE-IN
Superb animation gives you every emotion – from triumph to excruciating pain.

OUT UK DECEMBER JAPAN NOW

MADDEN NFL 2001

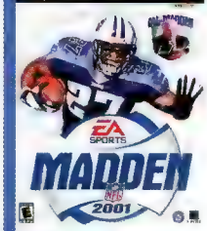
Pumped-up, armoured athletes battle on a pitch of artificial turf. Injuries are shown in slow-motion. Every side has three teams. This is Maddeness.

REVIEWER: Pete Wilton

INFO

- **CODE TESTED** PAL (UK)
- **DEVELOPER** Electronic Arts
- **PUBLISHER** Electronic Arts
- **GAME TYPE** Sports Sim
- **PRICE** £39.99-£44.99
- **ESSENTIALS** 1-4 Players, DualShock 2, Memory Card

PlayStation.2



DETAILS

- All 31 NFL teams, plus all six Europe NFL teams.
- Play an entire season of games.
- Selected classic teams of the past.
- The chance to coach your favourite team.
- Create your own players.
- Earn Madden Cards to trade or buy cheats and secrets.
- New player specific touchdown celebration moves and taunts.

DOLPHINLAY QUAY: Swift running backs stand little chance [illegible]

TACKLE SHOP: Thanks to the margarine smooth animation [illegible]

LETS GET READY TO FUMBLE: Passing plays run a high [illegible]

NIGHT OF THE PUNTER: Your special teams come into [illegible]

MADDEN WHO?

John Madden is the godfather of American Football, sort of Des Lynham and John Motson rolled into one. Former head coach of the 1977 Super Bowl-winning Oakland Raiders team and one of the most successful coaches of all time, he achieved lasting fame as a CBS sports commentator. The first *Madden* game appeared on the Apple II computer in 1989, but his first console appearance was on Mega Drive in 1990 with *John Madden Football*. The series spans a decade with nine more games gracing SNES, Saturn, PlayStation and now PlayStation 2.

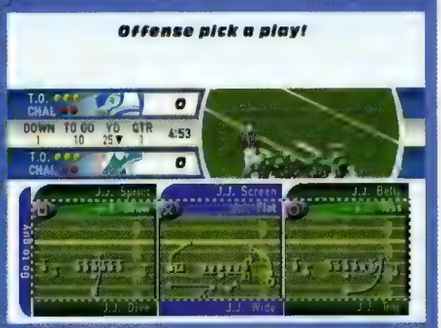
MADDEN AS HELL: Our American friends don't rate this new installment's commentary too highly. We think it's ace.

HOW IT WORKS: OFFENCE

First pick which offensive tactic you want to use. Once you've done this you'll be taken into the game proper, where you control the quarterback – he crouches behind a line of his own men, then moves back ready to give the ball to a running back or throw it to a player down the field. The icon above each player shows which button to press to make the quarterback pass to them. If you complete the pass, control switches to the player who caught the ball.

BUM RUSH THE SHOW: Carrying gives you less yardage, but decreases the chance of conceding possession.

PLAY FOR TODAY: It's crucial to read defensive plays. Dissecting an opponent's blocking line moves you up the field.



BY THE BOOK: Passing, faking and running plays are displayed for your quarterback to dictate the offensive strategy.

IMPACT POINT

Better than nailing some poor offensive runner to the turf with a tooth-liberating tackle, passing for a touchdown is the real thrill of *Madden*. Set up the play, pick your safest pair of hands, loop the ball over the top and watch your player grapple with it and then waltz in for a seven point score!

A list of the top ten sports games series of all time simply wouldn't be complete without *Madden*. Pixel-for-pixel, year-on-year, way back since consoles only had 16bits, it has been one of the most consistently thoughtful and well-constructed game sequences ever. The reason why it seldom gets the recognition it deserves, of course, is that most people are suspicious of the intricacies of American Football. Which is a shame, because it's a sport that's perfect for turning into a videogame.

Those who know their gridiron from their steam iron look away now, as for the rest here's a lightning fast introduction: American Football is a sport that's based on gaining territory and getting the ball to either end of the pitch (the End Zones). When a team has the ball they have four chances (downs) to move it ten yards down the pitch. Fail to move it after these four downs and, like the fifth tackle in Rugby League, the opposition get the ball. Keep your drive going, however, and you'll have the chance to score. You get seven points for moving the ball into the End Zone, plus a one point conversion, and three for kicking a field goal.

ARMOURED, COR...

American Football is the perfect sport for videogames because the quarterback can control both the tactics and mechanics of each offensive play. Using a playbook you choose your team's formation, what they are going to do and then, during the play itself, decide who to throw or give the ball to. Of course you also control the player running with the ball or the player trying to tackle him, but what it means is that (much more than in soccer games) one person can really control a whole team. The downside of this is that if you make the wrong decision you've only got yourself to blame, especially as in *Madden* you can also be the coach who's responsible for signing and selling players.

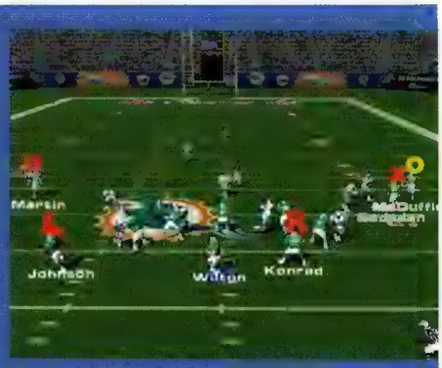
Naturally you won't be thinking about any of the above while watching *Madden NFL 2001* in motion. What you'll be goggling at is the incredible quality of both the graphics and the animation. "Just look at the shine on his helmet..." you'll gasp, for *Madden 2001* is surely one of the prettiest sports games ever made. Although some may find the player's spooky ▸

"WHAT YOU'LL BE GOGGLING AT IS THE INCREDIBLE QUALITY OF BOTH THE GRAPHICS AND THE ANIMATION. JUST LOOK AT THAT SHINY HELMET"

HOW IT WORKS: DEFENCE

Things are rather simpler when you're trying to halt your opponent's progress down the field, as opposed to trying to get all offensive with your quarterback. You pick your defensive tactic and then control just a single guy who can run, tackle or try to take the ball from an opposing player. Switch using ⊗ to select the player nearest the ball or the intended receiver. If you manage to intercept a pass thrown by the opposing quarterback this regains possession for your team. See, American Football's not so hard to get to grips with after all...

WHEN IT COMES TO THE CRUNCH... If you can't block, you won't win. Good stops are as crucial as touchdowns.



HIS MASTER'S CHOICE: Name the quarterback after yourself, choose a killer play and reap all the glory...

SEIZE AND PICKLE: But, give the ball away to the opposition and it's you that'll have to hide from the coach during time-out.

INSIGHT

Lesley Visser, formerly of the USA's popular Monday Night Football TV show, gives the commentary team the 'fluff' reports. We can't imagine what Gabby Yorath would say to a similar suggestion.

▸ wide-awake eyes a little scary, there's no doubting the incredible effort that's been lavished on the player models – even the officials measuring out ten yards with their chain are crisply animated. Picking up the joypad will inform anyone who's played *Madden* on PSone that *2001* takes realism to a new level. Not only do hulking linebackers dwarf tiny tightends on-screen, but the physics of how they interact is spot-on – large players can steamroller smaller ones, but are slower and less agile. Rather like in a football management sim, getting familiar with the strengths and weaknesses of your players is the key to success, as well as finding out the play tactics that best suit the star individuals in your squad.

SWEETNESS AND LIGHT: The players' plastic and fabric surfaces have been rendered beautifully.

It's the tactical side of things that's most likely to put off first-timers but hook veterans. To be fair, *Madden 2001* does default to an Easy Play option that helps you select the right kind of attack or defence. But still, the sheer number of different tactics on offer can confuse even those with a working knowledge of the sport. Only careful study of the playbook diagrams and how the action unfolds will make it clear where and when each formation should be used. Rather like button mashing in a combo-ridden beat-em-up, thrashing about trying all sorts of weird combinations before discovering a match-winning strategy – like your defensive line getting a chance to tackle the opposition's quarterback – is the way you'll learn all the great plays.

PICK 'N' MIX

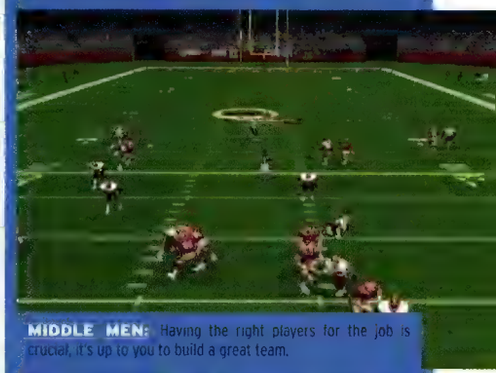
The true genius of *Madden NFL 2001* is that you have as much control off the pitch as on it. Don't like the playbooks on offer? Then invent your own, picking plays you like then flicking through every formation known to man until you're satisfied with both the overall strategy and the position of your players – you can even redefine the audibles from your quarterback that change the play just before the action starts.

In the States there has been some criticism of *Madden NFL 2001*'s passing system. True enough, it's quite hard to pass to a player on the move before they reach their end position (shown

ROUT ONE

Madden NFL 2001's passing game isn't perfect, but you can improve the completion rate of your quarterback by employing the route passing system. Hold down ⊡ before you press the button corresponding to a player and you'll throw to a point on that player's route through the play, rather than where he's destined to end up. It takes practice to perfect, however, as you need to take control of the receiver early to ensure the pass isn't intercepted.

QUARTERBACK WITH CHEESE: As you get used to the subtleties of the game you'll start to beat the best.



MIDDLE MEN: Having the right players for the job is crucial, it's up to you to build a great team.

"RUN FORREST, RUN!" Don't hand the ball to a defensive lineman if you want a startling 60 yard running gain, though.

MAKE ME A MAN

One of the joys of *Madden* is generating your own idea of a perfect player. Not only do you get to pick every detail of their costume, but you also set their height and weight which has a bearing on the maximum skill levels in different departments. Large players will never be as fast as small ones but they will have greater momentum, allowing them to break tackles more easily.

MISSING IN ACTION: If you feel that your all-star team's lacking a certain speed and punch in its line-up...

SKINNY PUPPY: Take a fate graduate that's been wasting away in your locker room for years...

STRAPPING JOCK: And turn him into a ball-carrying, limb-pounding monster. Just wind him up and watch him go.

IMPACT POINT

It might be risky, and you will certainly look foolish if you make a mess of it, but fooling the opposition by pretending to take a field goal and then cheekily lobbing it to a running back to make the yards for a first down or score is oh-so satisfying. Very much one of *Madden NFL 2001*'s impact points.

HE'S HURT!

Injuries are all part of the gridiron game. You'll see some sickening impacts during your time as an NFL all-star, and while nobody's knees get bent the wrong way, players do genuinely get hurt.

Happily, with *Madden NFL 2001*'s handy Easy Play mode on, your PS2 takes care of the substitutions for you, leaving you to concentrate fully on your next play. Start to feel your feet a bit more, and you'll be able to switch the subbing feature over to manual though...

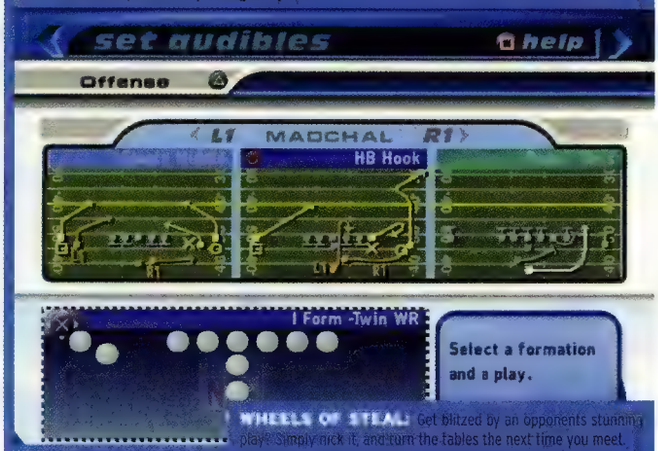
CRACK OF RIBS: You'd have thought that all that plastic would save the pain of broken bones and bruising

NO SPRAIN, NO GAIN: If you're more familiar with your playing squad you'll know when to rest an ailing star

CATCH-MEANT AREA: Enjoy the perfect pass in *Madden's* impressive animation time and over again

BE THE BOSS

Not only can you run your team on the pitch, but you can also manage them off it by creating your own coach and then hiring him. Crucially, you can completely customise your coach's playbook, taking plays from other books and monkeying around with different formations until you're dizzy enough to puke.



WHEELS OF STEAL: Get blitzed by an opponents stunning play? Simply nick it, and turn the tables the next time you meet.

COACH POTATO: Go for the sports-casual look if you want to

by the colour-coded arrows in playbook diagrams), but even if this is the result of slightly unreliable AI it actually creates the same sense of tension that a real quarterback would feel when calling this kind of play. It's also noticeable that the more skillful your quarterback, the better he is at picking out a player through a crowd of bodies; and the more able your receiver, the better he will be at shielding the ball and catching it one-handed. Yet as in the real thing the key to success is anticipating what the opposition will do and adapting your strategy accordingly. You'll see holes opening up in the opposition's front line as players block, receivers pull away from their markers early and blockers suddenly become wide open for a cheeky sideways pass and run. This'll allow you to take lesser teams into the play-offs and all the way to the Super Bowl.

"IN MADDEN YOU HAVE AS MUCH CONTROL OFF THE PITCH AS ON IT. DON'T LIKE THE PLAYBOOKS ON OFFER? THEN, INVENT YOUR OWN"

LOOKS, BRAINS AND MUSCLES

What sticks in the mind after playing this title is just how polished it is for a first-gen PS2 game. Granted, EA have got over a decade of experience to draw on, but even taking this into account it's amazing how many features have been squeezed into *Madden's* padded Lycra pants.

For instance, take the Madden Cards – special items you can earn for completing challenges like throwing to three different receivers during the game or engineering a thirty yard run. These cards can then be used to unlock cheats, such as the All Madden superteams of yesteryear. Then there are the replays that let you re-live the last play from any angle, camera position and at any speed you desire. You could be so busy thumbing through the playbook that you don't even notice that while you're doing so the centre section of the screen shows the two sides psyching themselves up. Perhaps the surprising thing is that despite all these extras *Madden 2001* doesn't feel in the least bloated, its slick presentation gives you easy access to every area but never overloads you with too many options screens at once. It really is one of the most polished PS2 games we've seen so far.

If this was a soccer game it would destroy EA stablemate *FIFA*. Imagine a soccer game that allowed you to both coach and play as your favourite team with a top-notch create-a-player option, the chance to make new signings and carry statistics over from season to season, all wrapped up with outstanding graphics. We promise it'll happen one day... **PSM2**

Madden NFL 2001 is a launch game in the US, but is available in December in the UK

ABOUT A HUNK: The in-game football is as close to the replays. The selection of the players is stunning

COACH'S CHOICE

1. **MADDEN NFL 2001** PS2's superior graphics abilities bring a whole new dimension to a winning series.
2. **MADDEN NFL 2000** It may be a year out of date but this is still the best American Football sim on PSone. Ten-hut!
3. **NFL GAMEDAY** A fun first appearance on the PSone for American Football.
4. **NFL XTREME** Not extreme at all.

PSM2 VERDICT

GAMEPLAY
+ Well-balanced, clever and tactical.
- Will tend to confuse newcomers.

GRAPHICS
+ Glorious models, lighting and animation. Superb Replay mode.
- Erm, players walk through each other.

SOUND
+ Good information and pulse-raising crowd noise.
- Mr Madden does tend to chatter like a baboon.

LIFESPAN
+ Perfecting your tactics and the two-player game really last.
- One-player might get a little bit dull. Maybe.

OVERALL
This isn't just a great American Football game, it's a superb sports title that shows other series how it should be done.

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HARDCORE

INFO
- **CODE TESTED** PAL UK
- **DEVELOPER** Kemco (Paoaya Studio)
- **PUBLISHER** Planet
- **GAME TYPE** Driving
- **PRICE** TBC
- **ESSENTIALS** 1-2 Players, DualShock 2 Memory Card

PlayStation.2

DETAILS
- Four cities – Rome, London, San Francisco and Tokyo, with 27 levels in total.
- 75 car models, 12 of which are playable.
- Bonus levels – Obstacle Course, Time Trial, and Coin Grab.

MINI DRIVER: For all the detail in the environments, *Dare Devil*, unfortunately, just feels too aimless to be real fun.

ALFRESCO FIASCO: How much damage could you *really* do in a Fiat 500 before both your legs shattered?

OUT UK now

TOP GEAR DARE DEVIL

Zip around beautifully rendered backgrounds in realistic motors, mucking stuff up… for floating coins.

REVIEWER: Joel Snape

Given the lasting popularity of the movie car chase, you'd think that free-roaming driving games would never run short of ideas. *Driver* is cops 'n' robbers in classic Bullitt-style, *Midnight Club* reminds us of the joyrider-glorifying, career-ruining Brit flick Shopping, and *GTA* shamelessly pilfers everything from The Italian Job to Speed. So, here's *Top Gear Dare Devil*, where you collect floating coins within a time limit. Oh, come *on*.

What's most upsetting is that there's a potentially great little game here – you've got four of the world's most picturesque cities to explore, and they're portrayed with tourist-brochure charm, *and* the game gives you bonuses for breaking things. True, your tiny car shunts transit vans aside like a uranium-fuelled snowplough, but the collisions are fairly forgiving, although we've ruined at least two perfectly good runs by getting snagged on bits of scenery. Oh, and you can smash everything except, bizarrely, lampposts, which has led to many a gnashed tooth in the PSM2 office.

COINING IT IN

Still, through it all, you're collecting floating coins. Ten minutes in, you'll be trapped in a whirl of self-doubt, since what you're doing seems so divorced from the real world that it's almost pointless to continue. As if to make things worse, everyone else in the game is just as indifferent, resolutely sticking to their driving line as you hurtle towards them on the wrong side of the road. Even the police have better things to do. And are the pedestrians just as blase? There. Aren't. Any.

So, drive through different bits of the city, collect enough coins, and you'll get some new missions and a different car. The car bit helps, because the early ones are hopeless – the Fiat 500, for instance, accelerates like a kneeless moose and has the kind of turning circle you'd normally associate with an aircraft carrier. The later Toyotas and Lotuses are noticeably faster, but the early missions feel painfully slow, and besides, everyone wants to scoot around in a new VW Beetle or a Mini Cooper.

To be fair, the game grows on you. There's a weak stab at a two-player mode and a Break Everything bonus game which awards you points for airtime and collision ferocity. But, these suffer from the same feeling of can't-be-arsed detachment as the main game. Pity. **PSM2**

Make a mess of London from November 24th.

INSIGHT

Movie Trivia: A sequel was proposed to The Italian Job, beginning where its predecessor left off. By leaving the coach's engine running – to use up all the fuel in its rear-mounted tanks – our thieving heroes escape the cliff.

MR. BRIDGER'S CHOICE

1. **SMUGGLER'S RUN** Riotous cross-country racing, and hi-octane smuggling. With a point to it.
2. **MIDNIGHT CLUB** Grubby, dangerous, extremely illegal and dark street racing. With a point to it.
3. **TOP GEAR DARE DEVIL** Pretty, city-touring with some time-limited coin-collecting thrown in. With absolutely no point to it.

PSM2 VERDICT

GAMEPLAY
+ Occasional bursts of excitement.
- Mindless central idea.

GRAPHICS
+ Nice detail. Lovely realistic scenery.
- Everything breaks veeery slooowly.

SOUND
+ Competent enough vrooms, crashes and music.
- Not even a hoot from a multiple-car pile-up.

LIFESPAN
+ Plenty of missions and lots of cars to play them with.
- Not much incentive to do so, though.

OVERALL
Like a 3D *Pac-Man*, only in small cars and without the ghosts. Yep, exactly as inane as that sounds.

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STALLED

GAMESTER
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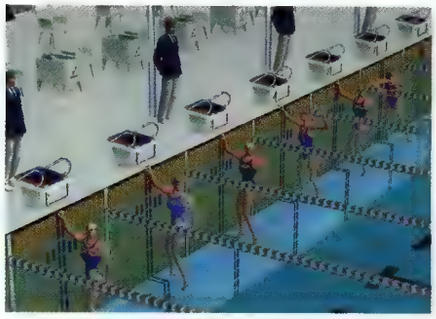
RUN, RUN, RUN
Maurice Green protects his 100m World Record ruthlessly. Prepare to run like hell.

OUT UK DECEMBER 07

ESPN INTERNATIONAL TRACK AND FIELD

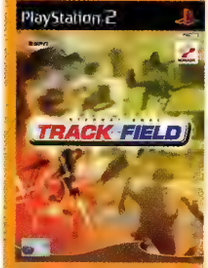
Armchair athletics for the terminally tardy? It doesn't get much better than the old man of arcade classics, but after 15 years it could be time to give those fingers a well-deserved rest.

REVIEWER: Duncan Baizley



INFO

- **CODE TESTED** PAL (UK)
- **DEVELOPER** KCEO
- **PUBLISHER** Konami
- **GAME TYPE** Sports Sim
- **PRICE** TBC
- **ESSENTIALS** 1-4 Players, DualShock 2, Memory Card



DETAILS

- Ten events: 100m Dash, 110m Hurdles, Long Jump, Pole Vault, Javelin Throw, 100m Freestyle, Weight Lifting, Horizontal Bar, Trap Shooting, Rhythmic Gymnastics
- Trial Mode, Championship Mode
- Dance mat compatible

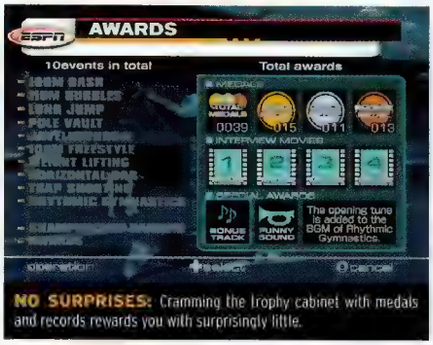
ALL YOUR VAULT: Once you've sussed the basic technique for even a tricky event like the Pole Vault, World Records fall fast.

WATER WASTE: The Freestyle event is a real knuckle breaker. Notice how you only compete as a female in swimming and dancing.

IMPACT POINT

As beautiful as it looks, it's been around for a long time. World Record holder, Maurice Green, lines up in the most attractive version of the 100m Dash yet. Fingers on buttons, and... aaaarghhh. Unless you're out the blocks close behind him, it'll take a prolonged burst of finger pumping to catch him...

MONSTER CHUCKS: After your Javelin throw, out come the officials with a tape measure. The detailing is quite superb.



NO SURPRISES: Cramming the trophy cabinet with medals and records rewards you with surprisingly little.

STEPPING SELECTIONS: The tutorials are essential for the bemani-based events, but it's still not terribly taxing.

This digit-numbing classic needs only a brief introduction: the idea behind it stems from the 1980s, it hurts your fingers and can, in the wrong hands, knock hours off a pad's life. Konami have left little unchanged – from the all-out two-button desperation of the 100m dash to the subtle timing of the Javelin.

What they have introduced are some stunning, but not perfect, visuals and two bemani-flavoured gymnastic disciplines. The Horizontal Bar involves some sharp blink-and-you've-had-it timing and some nifty tapping-in of move combinations. Get all the elements right and you dismount like a pro. Get 'em wrong and you look like a right chimp as you stumble off the crash mat. The Rhythmic Gymnastic event is simply *Dance Dance Revolution* with a twirly streamer on a stick, just match the moves, that increase with difficulty, on the joypad or any dance mat peripheral.

Graphically, it's beautiful. Full motion-capture from top athletes means that the running, jumping and throwing actions are realistic, but not quite seamless, with occasionally some jarring transition between actions. The attention to detail, however, is astounding – non-participating athletes warm-up as you sprint past them, photographers sport elephantine telephoto lenses and the post-event reactions from the triumphant and defeated capture the atmosphere of big event athletics brilliantly.

There's little complaint with the way it looks – except maybe the twirling arm of the floor gymnast looks like it's been victim of a particularly vicious shark-bite, and Konami still can't quite do teeth without making their models look like they're sucking a mouthful of fizzing Spacedust – the problem is in the gameplay itself. No matter how you tart up *Track and Field*, it's still essentially a reaction-tester with limited one-player longevity. Like any simplistic pick-up-and-play sports game – *FIFA's* a top example – it only grows in stature as a multi-player grudge match. *Track and Field's* challenges are no test for nimble fingers anymore. Busting World Records gives you an hour-or-so more enjoyment after you've nailed every Gold, and there're some unlockables to go after – they're a bit poor, including video footage of 100m champion Maurice Green, who looks oddly uncomfortable with motion-capture ping pong balls taped to his nut. The look of bewilderment on his face when asked if he has any *Track and Field* tips is classic. Different sets of sound effects can also be unlocked, but soon become tiresome, and whoever believed that players would relish the opportunity to button-combo their way through the appaling *T&F* theme tune in the Floor Gymnastics event was clearly out of their mind.

The balance of events doesn't scream value – for every brilliant Trap Shooting or Horizontal Bar, there's a brain-numbingly easy 100m Freestyle. Woefully under-evolved, *Track and Field* has slipped from Arcade King to anachronism. **PSM2**

"THE ATTENTION TO DETAIL IS ASTOUNDING – ATHLETES WARM-UP AS YOU SPRINT PAST THEM, PHOTOGRAPHERS SPORT ELEPHANTINE LENSES"

INSIGHT

- The Olympic athletes who are featured in the game performed over 750 motion-captured animation sequences.
- ESPN might have all the camera angles, but the official Olympic licence belongs to Eidos Interactive.

OSTEOPATH'S CHOICE

1 **ESPN INTERNATIONAL TRACK AND FIELD**
The game's still more or less the same, but now with beautiful graphics.

2 **SYDNEY 2000**
Nice attempt on PSone to stretch out the one-player mode.

3 **TRACK AND FIELD 2**
With no smart visuals from PSone, the old dear looks knackered.

4 **OLYMPIC GAMES**
Looks terrible, plays like a hoop and stick.

PSM2 VERDICT

GAMEPLAY
+ Initially challenging and viciously competitive in multi-player.
- Very old fashioned, unsophisticated button pummelling.

GRAPHICS
+ Realistic athlete models. Fantastic attention to detail.
- Shonky, bitty crowds and some jerky moments.

SOUND
+ Responsive applause. Unlockable sound effects options...
- ... you soon get sick of running like a gorilla and landing on dogs.

LIFESPAN
+ An old-skool testosterone-fuelled, mate-baiting classic.
- Over in a few hours on yer Jack Jones.

OVERALL
Dazzling to look at, but over too quickly in one-player. A jolt of bemani-flavoured sophistication doesn't save it from looking tired.

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WORN OUT

TURN OVER FOR MORE *TRACK AND FIELD*

GOING FOR GOLD

An individual test of endurance or a MultiTap 2-warming battle of competitive minds? We sort out the crafty singles from the creamy doubles. On your marks...

100M DASH

Roping in World Record holder Maurice Green means that you have to take the record off him. 9.73 seconds might seem like a brief moment in time, but coughing your guts up on his heels in one-player seems like an eternity, and once you've managed it, you won't hurry back. Best concentrate on beating your mates.

VERDICT
One-player: Bronze
Multi-player: Gold

100M FREESTYLE

Using the shoulder buttons, the pool event requires synchronisity as well as speed, so expect knuckle cramp to set in fairly swiftly. As inviting as the water looks, it's a bit bleak in the pool on your own. Like the other flat-out racing events it needs a few friends in with you – and you look good in a swimsuit for once...

VERDICT
One-player: Bronze
Multi-player: Gold

110M HURDLES

Like sprinting but with, er... gates in the way. Timing's everything and the first few attempts at matching the pulsing bar above your speed indicator will make you look like a tall boy on a paper round rather than an athlete. A Gold and World Record in one-player will be the end of it. It's a laugh to play with friends, though.

VERDICT
One-player: Bronze
Multi-player: Gold

WEIGHT LIFTING

Clean and jerk... how many people do you know like that? This is great, for about five minutes. Move through the stages of this vein-popping event with a combination of fiddly timing and manic pad-wrecking, it's worth it – when you get that World Record your lifter spectacularly falls backwards onto his arse.

VERDICT
One-player: Gold
Multi-Player: Silver

LONG JUMP

One of the few events that might have you sneaking back to gain an extra bit of distance, or perfect the toe-to-the-Plasticine take off. There's some multi-player enjoyment, but, especially with four players, all the waiting around for your turn to jump in the sand doesn't quite make it worth while.

VERDICT
One-player: Silver
Multi-player: Bronze

HORIZONTAL BAR

Probably the trickiest event of all, and one of the more satisfying. Stop the falling power bar in the flashing lettered zone and then punch in directional instructions. Scoring's tight on this one, so multi-player's quite a test of nerves. You've got to love those stumbling dismounts...

VERDICT
One-player: Silver
Multi-Player: Gold

POLE VAULT

Vaulting demands a little more patience with the control system at first, but once you've managed an easy height, and then progressed to a record height, the party's over. The animation and dynamics look great, but don't expect your easily impressed friends to gawp too long – they'll be itching for something else.

VERDICT
One-player: Silver
Multi-player: Bronze

TRAP SHOOTING

Apart from the great event intro scene, where your shooter can be seen loading absolutely nothing into his gun, shooting's always been a fine multi-player. The more you hit, the more you'll be thrown to shoot at – miss and the number of clays reduces. Again, this is a real test of nerves in the final rounds.

VERDICT
One-player: Silver
Multi-Player: Gold

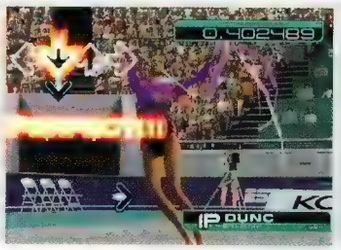
JAVELIN THROW

The third of the classic lone disciplines. The control method's been cunningly altered to give you the idea that you're not simply long-jumping upside-down. It's frightening how quickly you'll be throwing to the edge of the running track, which makes handing over to another player nice and quick.

VERDICT
One-player: Bronze
Multi-player: Silver

RHYTHMIC GYMNASTICS

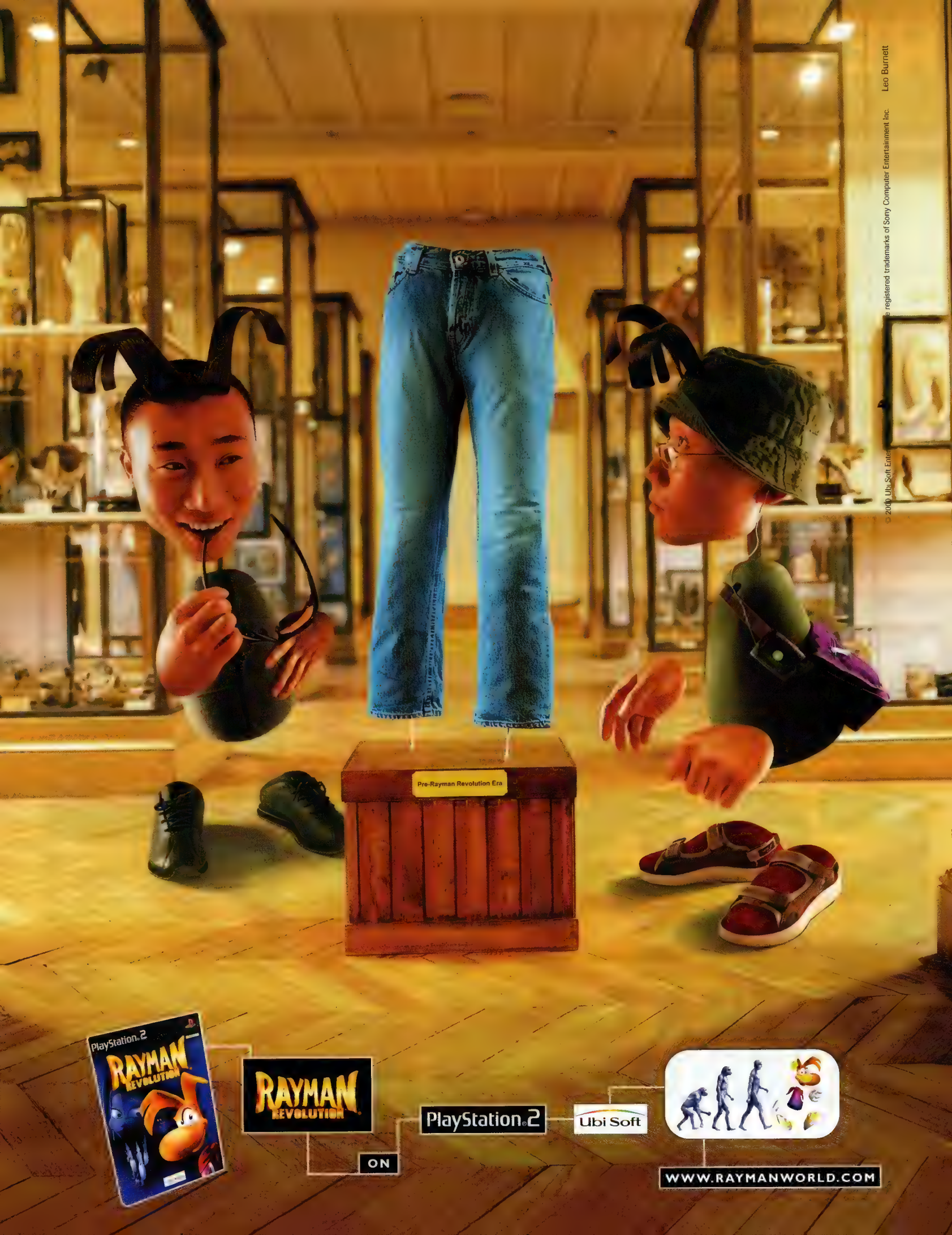
Like locusts, bemani games are unstoppable, and also deceptively easy. It's a concentration thing, but the combinations aren't so complex that you won't be able to master them in a few well co-ordinated attempts.



VERDICT
One-player: Bronze
Multi-Player: Silver

If there was a pivotal argument for the inclusion of a MultiTap 2 with PS2, then the results above show this is it. Not because you'll be rushing out to buy *Track and Field*, but because the game's useless without one. If this was a single-player title, it wouldn't be worth the CD it's printed on: the games are tired and take no time at all for today's slick and able players to crack.

But, apart from the luxurious visuals there're still a couple of reasons to rent it from time-to-time, and get down to some four-way pants and vest running and throwing. The 100m Dash is gaming history, and its pick-up-and-play appeal means that 7-70 year-olds can dip for the tape.



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BIG AIR DAY: ESPN's realistic feel makes huge tricks difficult to pull off, and this kind of thing could easily end in tears.

OUT UK JANUARY 2001

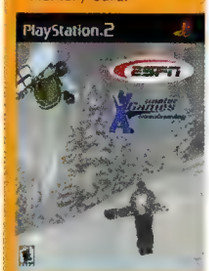
ESPN WINTER X GAMES SNOWBOARDING

Konami goes mad for realism, but do snowboarders *really* need to choose between velcro or drawstring trousers?

REVIEWER: Daniel Dawkins

INFO

- **DEVELOPER** Konami
- **PUBLISHER** Konami
- **GAME TYPE** Snowboard Simulation
- **PRICE** £39.99
- **ESSENTIALS** 1-2 Players, DualShock 2, Memory Card.



DETAILS

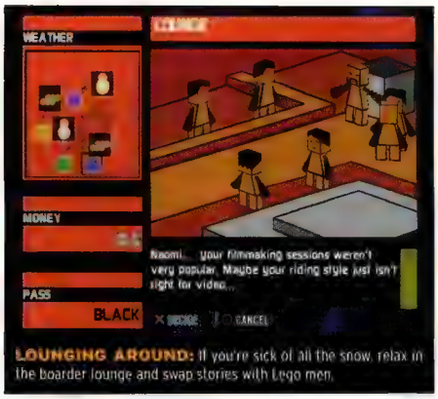
- Over 15 professional snowboarders to select, from Kevin Jones to Rio Tahara – all accurately modelled.
- Licensed equipment and clothing from 36 major manufacturer's, including Hurley, K2 and Airwalk.
- Dynamic replays can be saved to memory for repeated viewing.
- Alternative soundtrack including *Ben* by Fenix TX, *My Life Story* by MPMX and *Dear Kate* by Dynamite Jack.
- Real snowboard video footage from Destroyer by Kingpin Productions and This Time by Recast Media. And more.

I BELIEVE I CAN FLY: Jumps are highly satisfying, but you'll have to be tearing along at speed to nail them.

ESPN arrives hot on the heels of the fabulous *SSX*, eschewing the cartoon thrills of EA's effort to focus on realism. Sometimes, this gritty approach works, like Pierce Brosnan as 007. So it's a shame that *X Games* is more like George Lazenby – a misunderstood talent who some people wouldn't give a second chance.

You can be just *too* faithful to your subject matter. The snowboarding physics on offer here are unnervingly accurate. At slow speeds, it becomes almost impossible to turn. It's only when you angle down the slope and catch an edge that things start to happen. This might seem exciting for purists, but has a self-depreciating effect. Hardcore snowboard fans – the people *X Games* is aimed at – might find they've got better board control in real life. Shouldn't games be a liberating experience?

It's not all gloom and doom. After extended practice, the vagaries of the control system start to make sense. The ◻ button is used to crouch and build speed, while the ◎ button alternates between traditional turns and sharper carves – a



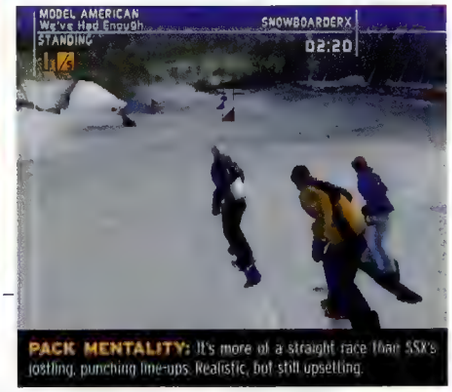
LOUNGING AROUND: If you're sick of all the snow, relax in the boarder lounge and swap stories with Lego men.

ALWAYS TAKE THE WEATHER WITH YOU: The snow effects aren't too convincing, but the Sun's glare is lovely.

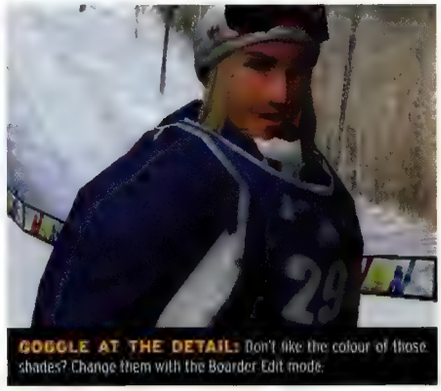
IMPACT POINT

As you venture into Snowboarder mode for the first time, the incredible depth of detail knocks you back. Is there anything that you can't adjust? Its easy to get sucked into a world where respect is as important as your brand of footwear.

SLIDERS: In comparison to the mighty SSX, even 50/50 board grinds are excruciatingly difficult to line up.



PACK MENTALITY: It's more of a straight race than SSX's jostling, punching line-ups. Realistic, but still upsetting.


GOGGLE AT THE DETAIL: Don't like the colour of those shades? Change them with the Boarder Edit mode.

nice touch. Jumps and spins are performed in a similar way to *SSX*, using a pre-wind system. Annoyingly, your boarder continues to move freely when the jump button is depressed, making it hard to line up for ramps properly.

The sharp learning curve eventually yields wild tricks. They're not as spectacular as *SSX*, but impressive nonetheless. When you feel confident in your abilities, the game offers a staggering number of challenges, with no shortage of genuine innovation.

INSIGHT

Terje Haakonsen is generally accepted as the world's best snowboarder. He's won more than 22 major titles in his 12 year career, and he's only 26. His heroes are Tony Hawk and Diego Maradona.

strangely detached – riders 'float' over scenery – but manage to dazzle in the almost life-like replays. Couple this with some tremendous character models – from Terje Haaksonsen to Tina Basich – and you've got a great package for hardcore fans of snowboarding.

Ultimately, by striving for realism, *X Games* feels less extreme than the mad, bad, cartoon world of *SSX*. Snowboarding is about adrenaline, not laboured physics. Given the choice, what snowboarder wouldn't choose triple back flips over a hard fought Indy grab?

PSM2

"DO THEY WEAR OAKLEY, NIKE OR SIMS? DO THEY WANT YELLOW OR ORANGE GOGGLES? DO THEY WANT TO ALIGN THEIR FRONT BINDING AT 30°?"

The X-Games mode is very comprehensive. There's a boardercross tour similar to *SSX*, where success moves you up the rankings. More interesting are the Half Pipe, Slope Style and Big Air modes. You get a really juicy variety of obstacles on which to test your mettle. Score targets are unforgiving and mistakes can prove unrectifiable, so keep practising.

CUSTOM AND EXERCISE

The real hook is the unrivalled Snowboarder mode. You can create your own rider in excruciating detail thanks to the extensive product licensing. Do they wear Oakley, Nike or Sims? Do they want yellow or orange goggles? Do they want to align their front binding at 30° to the horizontal? Quite frankly, *everything* is adjustable.

With your rider kitted up you can enter the Career mode. Balance your time between practise, competition and making the odd video. As you improve, so does your rider's kudos and sponsorships. There's even a lounge room where you can chat to other boarders.

If you've got the patience, *X Games* has got the rewards. The graphics may sometimes look

CELEBRITY STATUS: Snowboarding veterans will relish the appearance of the scene's regulars.

PURIST'S CHOICE

1 **SSX**
PS2's most startling achievement is a triumph of gameplay and longevity. Just buy it.

2 **TONY HAWK'S PRO SKATER 2**
The perfect fusion of credibility and crowd pleasing action.

3 **ESPN X-GAMES**
Ideal for hardcore snowboarding fans with a lust for detail. The graphics astound as often as the gameplay frustrates.

PSM2 VERDICT

GAMEPLAY
+ Real dynamics heartily reward extended play.
- A learning curve to rival Everest.

GRAPHICS
+ Sublime peripheral animations and intelligent replays.
- Your boarder can look divorced from the scenery.

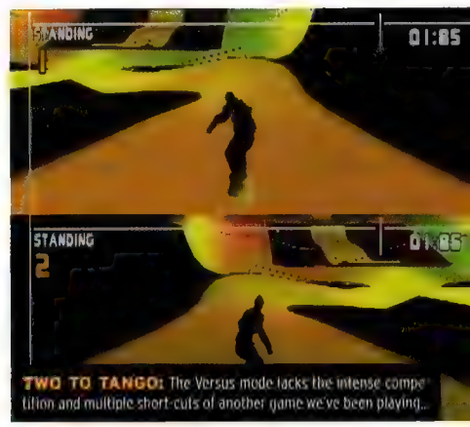
SOUND
+ Genuinely exciting tracks and powder ripples
- Not as immersive as we've come to expect.

LIFESPAN
+ The Snowboarder mode offers huge potential...
- ... If you can survive the awkward first few hours.

OVERALL
A game so showered in love that it doesn't know how to return it. The unforgiving learning curve may put the curious off.

70

HARDCORE

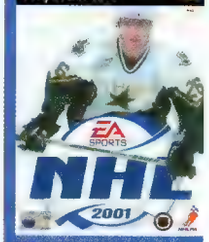


TWO TO TANGO: The Versus mode lacks the intense competition and multiple short-cuts of another game we've been playing...

SKATE EXPECTATIONS
Replays and cut-scenes show some impressive character models.

INFO
- **CODE TESTED**
  PAL (UK)
- **DEVELOPER**
  EA Sports
- **PUBLISHER**
  EA Sports
- **GAME TYPE**
  Ice Hockey
- **PRICE**
  £39.99
- **ESSENTIALS**
  1-4 Players, DualShock 2, MultiTap 2, Memory Card

PlayStation 2



DETAILS
- There are 30 NHL teams as well as a cluster of international sides including England.
- Everything's been updated to cover the 2000/01 season along with the addition of two new NHL teams; the Columbus Blue Jackets and Minnesota Wild.

OUT UK NOW

NHL 2001

Know your breezers from your dekes? Then you just might like this...

REVIEWER: Jonathan Bryant

EA's *NHL* series has been cutting the ice since 1994 with varying results. Some versions of the game have had fans yodelling with joy, while others have left the rink desolate, the domain of the Zamboni pottering around the rink and little else.

Straight off it's good news for hardcore hockey fans, as there're enough options in here to allow you to personalise everything down to the physics of the puck. The only problem with this level of customisation is that, even when using ⓡ to skip screens, it can take an age to move from gameplay back to the menus thanks to a sluggish front end.

PUCK LUCK

Once out on the ice, though, the game runs at a hectic pace with some impressive moves at your disposal. A quick tap of ⊗ produces some sharp passing, while speedboosts, shots and tackles are accessed via ⓞ and ⓡ. So, within minutes, you'll be pulling off dump passes, back flicks and taking some outrageously powerful shots at goal.

Which is where you begin to encounter problems, as beating the goalie seems to be more about player stats than your stick skills. Get yourself a hot forward though, and chances are you'll come out victorious. The random nature of the fights are also a disappointment, they appear to be the result of a character's aggression stats rather than the pounding body check you just pulled off.

Graphically, it's a case of light bursting off plastic helmets, as EA have buffed every reflective surface to eye troubling levels. There're also some solid player animations, with the added bonus that your team actually react emotionally to their performance. That said, there is a tendency for things to slow slightly when the screen is clogged with skaters and, at times, there're a few annoying instances of clipping.

But, essentially, it's the multi-player that really pulls this round. Slap in the MultiTap 2, customise your team players with your own names and prepare for an immersive experience. When it comes to collective thrills, *NHL 2001* doesn't disappoint. **PSM2**

Pucker up from November 24th

INSIGHT

- Jere Lehtinen – who features on the *NHL 2001* box and currently plays for the Dallas Stars – is 6ft tall, weighs 200lbs and has a shot record of 201 for the '97/'98 season.

PERSONAL SERVICES: PSM2's Editor fires off a 72mph slapshot, which fails to trouble the infallible keeper.

HANSON'S CHOICE

1. **NHL 2001**
   The improved graphics and incredible levels of customisation make up for difficulty of scoring in the one-player game.
2. **NHL 2000**
   The first to feature the 'big hit' button, allowing for some long plays.
3. **NHL 98**
   NHL '98 definitely made up for the 'style over substance' shortcomings of the '97 version.

PSM2 VERDICT

GAMEPLAY
+ Players belt around the rink with some convincing manoeuvres.
- Scoring against a skilled goalie is a tough nut to crack.

GRAPHICS
+ Team animations and player emotions add to the atmosphere.
- Occasional stabs of clipping are unnecessary.

SOUND
+ The commentary is fantastically tight.
- An appalling cock-rock intro track that'll set your teeth on edge

LIFESPAN
+ Great multi-player and customisable options.
- Frustration in the one-player may have you snapping your stick

OVERALL
It looks the business, has a pile of options and extras, but is sadly let down by its reliance on character stats rather than player skill.

70

SLIPPERY

Poor old Crash, everybody's after him. If you play as Crash or even against him, you are in for one hell of a free for all. You and three friends must drive tanks, fly saucers and ride polar bears whilst trying to annihilate each other. Fighting, pushing, cheating – whatever it takes – must be used to emerge victorious and be crowned champion. You can even kick.

DO NOT UNDERESTIMATE THE POWER OF PLAYSTATION

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INFO
- **CODE TESTED** PAL (UK)
- **DEVELOPER** Taito
- **PUBLISHER** Acclaim
- **GAME TYPE** Puzzle
- **PRICE** £29.99
- **ESSENTIALS** 1-2 Players, DualShock 2, Memory Card

DETAILS
- 10 playable characters.
- Six play modes.
- Six new features.
- Bub and Bob still star.

THE BOUNCER: Thanks to the inclusion of ricochet blocks you can pull off some pretty mental shots.

CHUCK D : Pukudon's an entertaining guy, with his vomiting and farting antics – it's all getting a bit *Pokémon* for us though...

OUT UK DECEMBER 08 **JAPAN** NOW

SUPER BUST-A-MOVE

Bub and Bob go next-gen with their puzzle insanity, making us hate to love again. Nurse!

REVIEWER: Jonathan Bryant

Will we never learn? It's like banging your head against a spike... or something. You'd think after the second time we might have stopped, sat back and said, "Maybe this isn't such a good idea" – but no.

It's been seven years since Bub And Bob jumped platform and launched themselves into a technicolour world of orb flinging, and for every incarnation there's been some poor sod dreaming of bubbles at 2am after sitting down for just 'one quick go'.

Super Bust-A-Move's gameplay is pretty much unchanged since its first outing in 1993. Sure, there're some quirky new features – conveyor belt walls, mini bubbles, ricochet obstacles and bubble captives – but at heart this is still the same puzzler we've all played before.

Still, what has PS2's magic done for the humble dragons and their kin? Well, as you'd expect, this is the best looking version we've seen, with some of the weirdest characters yet. Fancy taking control of a jolly doughboy who lets off a victory fart every time he fires a four-plus combo? You got it. Want to control a spongy Tate & Lyle sugarcube that turns into a plane? No problem.

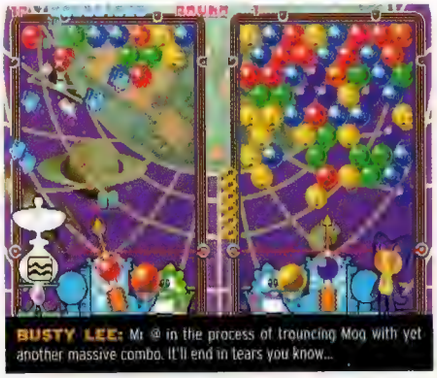
But, you'll only ever see these antics in your peripheral vision as this is the hardest *Bust-A-Move* to date. Get to the far side of the alphabetical one-player Puzzle mode and you'll need split-second reaction time. In fact, you actually cease to be aware of what's going on at a conscious level.

It's not all crazy combos and button mashing though, as the game does give you plenty of puzzles you can ace in under 30 seconds. Add these variations to the four other modes (Training, CPU Versus, Quick Puzzle and Classic), then slap on a head-to-head challenge that'll have you smiling smugly while your mate garottes himself with the SCART cable.

It'll make you miss precious sleep, it'll turn you against your mates. It's an evil genius pushing the button to the shark-infested bubble pool. Consider yourself warned. PSM2

"IT'LL MAKE YOU MISS PRECIOUS SLEEP"

BUBBLE TROUBLE: Concentrate on the in-game action and you'll easily miss the backdrop's excellent animation.



BUSTY LEE: Mr ® in the process of trouncing Mog with yet another massive combo. It'll end in tears you know...

BALLOONIST'S CHOICE

1. **FANTAVISION** It's fireworks, it's two-player nirvana. The simple things tend to deliver the most enjoyment.
2. **SUPER BUST-A-MOVE** Lovely to look at, and still a devil to beat.
3. **AQUAAQUA** Cute, fun and infuriating in its inception, but over all too quickly – even in the colourful, fist fight-provoking two-player mode.

PSM2 VERDICT

GAMEPLAY
+ Chimp-simple with a mere three buttons to concern yourself with.
- Pretty much unchanged since the game's last outing.

GRAPHICS
+ Sure is pretty with a '30s Astro Boy feel to everything.
- All the eye candy is just there to tart up the basic gameplay.

SOUND
+ Catchy tunes that people will beg you to stop humming.
- Get asked "Ready?" one too many times and you'll go postal.

LIFESPAN
+ The multiple routes through will keep you out of trouble for weeks.
- Will anyone be masochistic enough to join you in two-player?

OVERALL
It's super-slick, extremely addictive and easy to get into – but ultimately little more than a PS2 buffing of the classic game.

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LOVELY BUBBLY

OUT UK NOW

AQUAAQUA

Yes, that really is one word. The PS2 debut for *Wetrix 2.0* might boast a new name, but is it still the same old story?

REVIEWER: Jonathan Bryant

The plot driving this aquatic *Tetris*-like gameplay begins with an asteroid impact creating the home world of the Aquas, which is then subsequently plagued by attacks from four elemental bosses. As if it matters. Your job? To defend the planet from drought via a bit of creative terraforming.

Step onto the first floating slab of earth in the PlayStation 2 version though, and you'll soon realise that everything's got a bit brighter and bolder since the last, slightly sorry, outing on Dreamcast. The landscape is much more textured – water ripples off the banks with convincing fluidity – while everything's presented in a Plasticine-colourful way.

It's not all good looks with no substance, though. Nope, the gameplay's been fattened up with a loch full of new features as well. The most impressive of these has to be the inclusion of bingo. Stick with us – this has nothing to do with blue rinses, marker pens and china spaniels. Every time you evaporate a lake you get another item dropped onto your bingo card. Complete a line either horizontally or vertically and you open up a whole world of high scoring bonuses: Double Rainbows, Auroras, Bigger Drains, Time Stop... all the helpful extras you'll need if you're going to defend your land from the bosses who turn up and belch destruction.

However, you'll need to be pretty adept before these bonuses really come into play, as cramming enough evaporations – using the fireballs – into a level requires seriously nimble thumbs. As well as building up, you can also knock down – wipe away unsightly landform with the handy bomb, or simply drop death from above on your Sprite's head for cheap laughs.

The two-player option, where you can influence which horror drops on your opponent's ravaged land next, adds some mileage to the dangerously short one-player (we had it clocked in at under six hours), although it's debatable whether you'll be bothered to perfect your skills once you've reached the end once.

Which is a shame, as there're a lot of nice touches in here, like the accessible Training mode, the Noughts and Crosses two-player attacks and the polished action. If only there were a few more levels and bosses, this could well have challenged the likes of *Fantavision* for PS2 puzzle supremacy. **PSM2**

Yep it's a wet, wet, wet launch title and, for the bargain price of £24.99, this could well be an early success for SCi.

INSIGHT

This is *Wetrix's* fourth incarnation, and is the first one to offer you a special Aqua Cam so you can follow your little Sprite as he races unhelpfully about the landscape. Totally useless, though.

"IF ONLY THERE WERE A FEW MORE LEVELS AND BOSSES"

INFO

- **CODE TESTED** PAL (UK)
- **DEVELOPER** Zed Two
- **PUBLISHER** SCi
- **GAME TYPE** Puzzle
- **PRICE** £24.99
- **ESSENTIALS** DualShock 2, 1-2 Players, Memory Card

DETAILS

- There are four elemental bosses for you to tackle called Sparsit, Gradgrind, Slackbridge, and *Boundberry*. Hmm...
- Destructive forces include ice cube attacks, bombs and earthquakes.
- There are four time zones for you to build your lakes across ranging from Palaeozoic to Ancient Civilisation, plus one hidden level.

POND LIFE'S CHOICE

1. **FANTAVISION** Still the best of the bunch, especially considering the fresh new two-player mode.
2. **SUPER BUST-A-MOVE** A classic that's starting to show its age even after a PS2 polish.
3. **AQUAAQUA** A plucky little contender that truly does offer something fresh. It's just a pity there isn't enough of it.

PSM2 VERDICT

GAMEPLAY
+ Fluid, in every sense of the word. Tense and challenging.
- You only get the bingo bonus game if you're a *Wetrix* master.

GRAPHICS
+ Brighter than poster paint on a sunny day.
- Some major aiming frustrations caused by the static camera.

SOUND
+ Pleasant background music plus some ground-shaking effects.
- Erratic snores from the sleeping boss can grate after a while.

LIFESPAN
+ It takes time to get a better rating than 'drip' on all four levels.
- The two-player isn't that engaging.

OVERALL
A solid, if slightly small, puzzler with a host of features that will no doubt be whizzing around in numerous PS2s come launch.

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LIQUEFYING

From the makers of Official UK PlayStation Magazine

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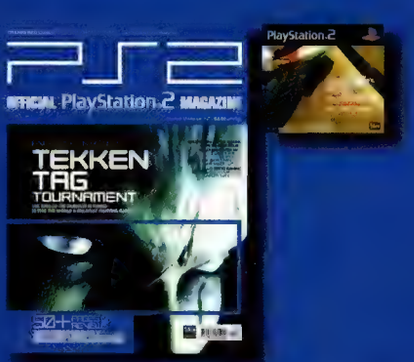
Welcome to a million worlds of genuine emotion. And the only magazine that takes you to them every month.

PS2
OFFICIAL PlayStation 2 MAGAZINE



Magazine and playable demo disc **First issue on sale November 10** Dare you buy before you try?

YOU ANIME ALWAYS
Orphen has a hard time keeping apprentices Cleo and Magnus in check.

OUT UK NOW

ORPHEN
SCION OF SORCERY

Young, hip magician joins Christina Aguilera for adventuring and a chat. Mostly chat. **REVIEWER:** Daniel Dawkins

Activision's *Orphen* doesn't want to be an RPG. Well, not in the Gandalf in gumboots sense. It attempts to break the stuffy stereotype using sparkly graphics and a hip young cast of adventurers – like a videogame teen movie, with all the inherited merits and failings

Yes, the characterisation is dire. You've got your pain in the ass know-it-all sorcerer – that'll be *Orphen* – and his two interminably clingy apprentices, Magnus and Cleo. Depending on your early choices, you'll either hook up with clunky warrior, Zeus, or BBC (Britney, Billie, Christina) lookalike, Sephy. Whichever path you choose, all roads lead to a time travelling adventure on Chaos Island.

The RPG element boils down to an absurdly linear quest punctuated by facile puzzles and epic battles. There's no complex character development and successful battles only reward you with better weapons and spells.

Exchanges occur in real-time, with weapons and spells assigned to specific buttons. With no fiddly menus or dodge commands, combat boils down to carefully timed exchanges. Insect throws laser, you use shield; Insect flashes, you throw laser. Get it? The enemy attack patterns are predetermined so it feels like playing scissors/paper/stone with a particularly daft robot. The annoying delay between commands doesn't help.

The plot development is equally facile. You're led Jack and Jill-style through levels by endless cut-scenes – handled using speech alone. The dubbing would embarrass the East European schedulers of *Pokémon*. It's atrocious. The voice acting is less convincing than a Ferrero Rocher commercial.

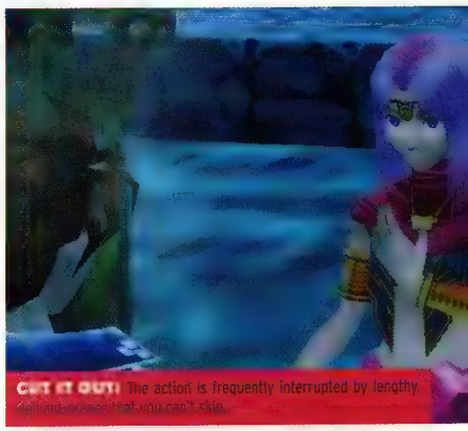
This is where the favourable comparisons begin. For every duff moment there's a fantastic set piece. Check out the weather and lighting effects as you do explosive combat with a huge sea dragon on a sinking ship. The eye candy atones for the limited interaction. Less Carmen Electra than electric carnage.

For a nation drilled on irony, there's a lot to admire in the hideous plot. Any game where a weedy version of Macaulay Caulkin can solemnly declare "I'll take you to your boyfriend's grave, IF IT'S THE LAST THING I DO", certainly gets our vote. Look we said it was like a teen movie.

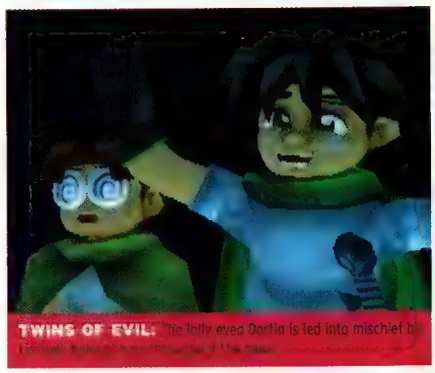
RPG die-hards will feel violated by the lack of depth. Those looking for a quick half an hour away from the missus after the pub will be delighted. It's adventuring-lite. The awkward platform moments get forgotten every time the dwarf with lollipop eyes waddles on screen. It's not compelling, it's not clever and it's not for repeated view. It's just a collection of shameless moments – and occasionally fun to boot.

Orphen is available now for PS2. PSM2

LOCK AND LOAD: Different spells are more effective on certain foes, but still leave you cursing the awful delay.



CUT IT OUT! The action is frequently interrupted by lengthy, unskippable cut-scenes.



TWINS OF EVIL: The jolly eyed Dorfin is led into mischief by [illegible]

INFO

- **CODE TESTED** PAL (UK)
- **DEVELOPER** Shade
- **PUBLISHER** Activision
- **GAME TYPE** RPG
- **PRICE** TBC
- **ESSENTIALS** DualSnock 2, Memory Card

DETAILS

- Three independent storylines activated by key early decisions.
- Five playable characters 30 enemies and nine bosses.
- Over 30 spells and weapons.

INSIGHT

- *Orphen* is based on a popular Japanese Anime series, the tale of a renegade sorcerer with attitude.
- Conversely, popular action RPG *Parasite Eve* is set to become an Anime film, created by ADV.

BABBLER'S CHOICE

1 **FINAL FANTASY VII**
Oodles of longevity stem from a visually opulent marriage of gameplay and plot.

2 **ORPHEN**
A frustratingly rushed effort, promising more thrills than it's poised to deliver.

3 **ETERNAL RING**
An appropriately titled RPG with crippling, stingy gameplay that never relents.

"IT FEELS LIKE PLAYING PAPER/SCISSORS/STONE"

PSM2 VERDICT

GAMEPLAY
+ Simple controls allow instant gratification...
- but exploration and combat are embarrassingly linear.

GRAPHICS
+ Striking bosses, diverse terrain and funky spot effects.
- Comic animations and you can't skip cut-scenes.

SOUND
+ Some haunting music and amusing speech...
- . . . which tends to be funny tragic not funny ha-ha.

LIFESPAN
+ Three independent plots encourage repeated play.
- The linear gameplay dilutes the perceived variety.

OVERALL
A brash attempt to defy RPG convention that ultimately over-stretches itself, leaving facile game-play that will irk die-hard fans.

56
IMMATURE

SPLIT-SCREAM: Backgrounds are well animated, but even the head-to-head racing won't fry your DualShock 2.

A TUG'S LIFE: Slip from land-based vehicles to chugging boats mid-race. Nice touch.

OUT UK DECEMBER 08

RC REVENGE PRO

More a sly enhancement than a complete overhaul, the PS2 upgrade of *RC Revenge* seems to offer lots on the surface – but is it as shallow as its PSone predecessors..?

REVIEWER: Jonathan Bryant

Ever seen a pro RC controller? It's a mess of channels, dials, switches and knobs favoured by tubby nerds with a passion for Ferrari key rings and pyjamas. Thankfully Acclaim have dispensed with all the twiddly darkness of torque ratios and have gone for a knockabout racer of tiny proportions, in this, the third in their PlayStation RC racer series.

So have they learnt from their mistakes on PSone (the shoddy *Re-Volt* and the OK *RC Revenge*)? Well, with the promise of a large garage of RC vehicles bolted onto 24 tracks, each designed in a Tex Avery style, and with an armoury of power-ups thrown into the mix, you might expect instant PS2 success... er, sadly, no.

CONFUSION SAYS...

The problems start with the fixed camera that only lets you see a minimal amount of the track ahead. Fine for long sweeping curves and straights, but as soon as you hit your first hill, with a hairpin corner over the brow, you'll find yourself at the back of the pack. So memorising the courses is a must – fair enough for a title such as this. But your navigation woes don't end there. As you open up more cups in Challenge mode, multiple routes around the tracks become commonplace. The path you should take is frequently unclear though. You're leading the field when suddenly your placing slips to eighth and you've no adequate explanation as to why.

"EVERYTHING HAS A SOLID AND COMIC FEEL ABOUT IT"

Visually, everything has a solid and impressively comic feel to it, but there is some noticeable graininess and slowdown at times – especially on the Jungle World tracks and in the multi-player – which seriously hampers any sensation of breakneck velocity.

Another irritating, although minor point, is the fact that in the review code we've been testing, after beating a Cup Challenge there's no guarantee that you'll see the vehicle you've been driving for the last hour on the victory podium – one of the other racers takes your place.

Redemption is at hand, though. The game has a limited but easy to use Track Editor, and the weather effects do add an extra dimension to the usual mini-race environments. The sheer size of the thing – with 24 reversible courses and 19 vehicles is a major plus. Some tracks even allow you to transfer from road vehicles to boats halfway through a race via warp gates.

Ultimately, *RC Revenge Pro* is satisfyingly big and reasonably clever at times. But it still can't live up to our PS2 enhanced expectations. **PSM2**

Tweak your aerial for two weeks after launch

INSIGHT

- The extra vehicles unlocked later in the game include a selection of scaled-down military craft, a Tonka-style dump truck and the racing game's ubiquitous UFO.

INFO

- **CODE TESTED** PAL (UK)
- **DEVELOPER** Acclaim Studios Cheltenham
- **PUBLISHER** Acclaim
- **GAME TYPE** Racing
- **PRICE** £39.99
- **ESSENTIALS** 1-2 Players, Memory Card, DualShock 2

DETAILS

- 24 tracks which are all playable in reverse.
- 10 power-ups and special weapons to wield.
- Nine cars initially available with 10 hidden vehicles to unlock.
- Highly accessible Track Editor.
- The theme park is divided into four specific sections: Horror World, Planet Adventure, Jungle World, AKLM Studios, Monster World and, Saints preserve us, Pirate World.

THE CLASH'S CHOICE

1. **SMUGGLER'S RUN** It might feature big boys' toys, but this still has the same level of bouncy thrills.
2. **WILD WILD RACING** Grab your miniaturisation ray, stick an aerial on 'em and you wouldn't know the difference.
3. **RC REVENGE PRO** Bottom of the league table thanks to its flaws, but there's a big enough challenge to briefly hold your attention.

PSM2 VERDICT

GAMEPLAY
+ Simple and driver-friendly with some moments of inspiration.
- Unforgiving track design and camera work.

GRAPHICS
+ Cartoony, with tonnes of smart background animations.
- Grainy. The visuals don't create a consistent sensation of speed.

SOUND
+ The Psycho music in the Haunted House is spot on.
- Too heavy on the effects.

LIFESPAN
+ Secrets, short-cuts and an excellent Track Editor
- The one-player challenge can be dealt with over a weekend.

OVERALL
The first mini-racer on PS2 does *just* enough to keep you pressing ⊗ 'til your knuckles pop. But it ain't an essential purchase...

56

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REVIEWS

THE ESSENTIAL PSM2 VERDICT ON EVERY NEW RELEASE

TEKKEN TAG TOURNAMENT

DEVELOPER
Namco
PUBLISHER
SCEE
REVIEWED
PSM2#01
EXTRAS
1-2 Players, DualShock 2, Memory Card.
NEW FOR THE UK
Anti-aliased graphics.

It's an ultra-new version of the legendary game, and the first beat-em-up to taste the power of PS2 in Japan.

Yes, Namco have cleaned up a few jagged edges that you'd barely have noticed, and yes, it's a bit slower than the Japanese version, although you'll need to run the two versions side by side to tell. But that's not going to change anyone's mind about *Tekken Tag*, and it certainly isn't going to allay or amplify everyone's fears about the capabilities of PlayStation 2.

If you haven't got *Tekken 3*, you either hate the franchise or you ought to buy this. If you have, well, here's what you need to know.

Some people will whine about how the tagging's just a gimmick. Ignore them. As you'll know if you've looked through our frighteningly comprehensive tips book, certain characters can join forces to instigate vicious team-up moves, while the tag juggles and Netsu power-ups are another essential skill for any aspiring fighter. Those reasonably familiar to *Tekken* will revel in new moves like Kazuya's Glory Demon Fist, while experts will feverishly dissect the possibilities of more subtle alterations like the now-automatic low parrys. Months after release, it's still a game we stick on for a quick scrap at every opportunity, and mastering it is a monumental task.

THE CROWD SAYS 'SELECTOR': After much clamouring from fans, there's now a stage-select available in Versus mode.

"MONTHS AFTER RELEASE, IT'S STILL A GAME WE STICK ON FOR A QUICK SCRAP AT EVERY OPPORTUNITY, AND MASTERING IT IS A MONUMENTAL TASK"

If you've got any doubts about how much of an improvement *Tekken Tag* is over previous incarnations, then don't buy it. But for heaven's sake don't play it either or you'll go back to your copy of *Tekken 3* and, suddenly, it won't seem so magical any more. You'll be left wondering why the characters don't grimace, why you never noticed how lifeless the backgrounds were, and why you can't do moves you've now come to rely on. *Tekken Tag* might not do everything we've been promised of the Emotion Engine, but it's a hypnotically attractive game with a finely-tuned core. **PSM2**

ALL CHANGE: As well as the shiny new costumes, note the improved glittery hit effects and boorish, yelling crowds.

PSM2

WHAT WE SAID
The best *Tekken* yet, but even with the looks, characters and snappy tag team thrills, this is still *Tekken 3* underneath.

87

ISSUE 01

WHAT WE SAY NOW
A mildly disappointing update of one of the greatest games ever – but it's still just that: a great game.

87

BLISTERING

REVIEWS

THE ESSENTIAL **PSM2** VERDICT ON EVERY NEW RELEASE

FIFA 2001

It looks incredible, but somewhere in the development the gameplay got left behind.

Niggles, what niggles? That's what you'll say after ten minutes with *FIFA 2001*. But on 11 minutes the same old cracks reappear. You see, the player models are so accurate that you tend to ignore the glaring faults. Who needs delicate passing when Peter Beagrie looks so good?

Changes have been made. The run, run – goal gameplay has been slightly alleviated by tougher goalies and less forgiving shots. The passing receives similar polish but still falls short of the high standards set by *ISS*. The biggest mystery is why *FIFA* perseveres with its token and ineffectual 'through balls', an area where *ISS* shines.

The leagues and customisable tournaments won't provide a lasting challenge for *FIFA* veterans. Longevity lies in the unashamedly fun two-player mode.

The annoying nuances of the solo game tend to disappear, as both players suffer equally. You'll forgive just about anything once you've roasted Richard Gough with an accurately modelled Ryan Giggs. Tellingly, the big Scot is equally likely to beat ten men and score. The refereeing is as atrocious as ever, although EA will claim it's accurately modelled on the Premiership.

Ultimately, this is the *DOA 2* of football games – instant, but inconsistent. In a similar vein, it uses graphical trickery to distract fans from the insubstantial gameplay. Yet for those who live and breathe football, the sight of Jaap Stam's beard will be more arousing than anything Kasumi and chums can offer. **PSM2**

FIFA 2001 is available now.

DEVELOPER
Electronic Arts
PUBLISHER
Electronic Arts
REVIEWED
PSM2#01
EXTRAS
Memory Card, DualShock 2
NEW FOR THE UK
Players names and likeness.

AD BUSTERS: The UK version features some bizarre promotional tie-ins, including Sure For Men. Euughhh.

ISSUE 01

WHAT WE SAY NOW
While post-pub games will delight, the limited single player challenge is a sobering long-term prospect.

79

FLAWED

DEVELOPER
Konami
PUBLISHER
Konami
REVIEWED
PSM2#02
EXTRAS
1-2 Players, DualShock 2, Memory Card.
NEW FOR THE UK
Absolutely nothing.

FLOW MOTION REPLAY: Adjustable camera angles are just one spiffy new trick in the much improved Replay mode.

YOU'RE NOT THE BOSS OF ME: It's now possible to access the Fight-the-Bosses mode without completing the game. Who cares?

GRADIUS 3 & 4

Scrolling 2D blast-em-ups on a 128bit console? You are joking... aren't you?

Well, they didn't change it after ten years, so expecting Konami to tamper with this for its UK release was always going to be futile. Let's get this straight – we've got nothing against nostalgia, but that doesn't include sluggish, infuriating, sub-*R-Type* shooters. After our initial, bile-spitting conviction it *could* be mastered, we quickly realised that the random attack patterns and ludicrous power-up system made it more likely we'd put a collective boot through the screen. PSM2

PSM2

WHAT WE SAID
A bog-standard but arcade perfect conversion of a dull, aging shoot-em-up. This is not what we had in mind for PS2. Arse.

29

ISSUE 01

WHAT WE SAY NOW
If anyone tells you games used to be all about the gameplay, duct-tape them to a chair and force them to play this.

29

VERY, VERY OLD

DYNASTY WARRIORS 2

Let yourself go in feudal China, but try not to get lost in the fog.

DEVELOPER
KOEI
PUBLISHER
Midas
REVIEWED
PSM2#01
EXTRAS
DualShock 2, Memory Card
NEW FOR THE UK
Translated historical background.

WHAT'S IN A NAME? Look at the little labels, allowing you to check that you're actually impaling the right people this time.

Don't be put off by the original *Dynasty Warriors*, a decidedly average *Soul Blade* imitator – the sequel's genuinely innovative, combining outlandish violence with strategic action to good effect. Support your allies, rally your troops, and charge into enemy lines with a huge spear – slightly disappointingly, the translation reveals it's no more tactical than we initially suspected. You can't, for instance, give explicit orders to your troops – simply rely on them following you. On the other hand, you're now able to relish the Discovery-Channel-style mission introductions, with a gravelly-voiced man explaining the genuine background of each level. You'll also be bombarded with battle commentary along the lines of 'Zhong Dou has taken the bridge', but it doesn't make much difference to the action.

Apart from the surprisingly interesting historical content, though, nothing's new – the glaring but excusable fogging's still there, and the horses still can't jump. So, an entertaining little game with some technically impressive points, but somehow diminished by the stiff competition it faces in the UK line-up. **PSM2**

PSM2

WHAT WE SAID
Excellent game structure, slightly hampered by a lack of imagination in its execution. Suggests a future for tactical ultra-violence

77

ISSUE 01

WHAT WE SAY NOW
Two extra points for the historical content, and one off because it looks slightly tame compared to the big boys.

78

WORTHY

RIDGE RACER 5

It's always been about speed, but that doesn't mean it can't change.

DEVELOPER
Namco
PUBLISHER
SCEE
REVIEWED
PSM2#01
EXTRAS
1-2 Players, DualShock 2, Memory Card.
NEW FOR THE UK
Some little black screen borders. Hoorah.

HANG THE DJ: The game looks the same as ever, but the radio segments are now accompanied by pretty graphics, as above.

The mad scramble for the Japanese launch line-up explained *Ridge 5*'s glaring failings, even if it didn't excuse them. Eight months on, the jaggies – which *do* matter when you're looking at supposedly streamlined cars – are all too apparent, and the fogging that plagues the two-player mode's absolutely unforgivable. New for the UK are some slimline borders at the top and bottom of the screen, which linger unpleasantly on the edge of your vision, although they at least help keep the speed up.

Despite all that, though, it's still *Ridge* – the powerslide-happy arcade racer that's been with the PlayStation since day one. Once you're past the intrusive front-end, there's plenty of challenge offered by the unlockable Duel Cars – pink caddies and VW Beetles that race like hell on wheels, and lots of fun to be had. The vast draw-in distance is an impressive sight, but don't bother if you've already got one of the more recent installments in the series. **PSM2**

PSM2

WHAT WE SAID
Stacks of fun, but hardly innovative. Definite room for improvement, especially where you really need it – in the two-player mode.

74

ISSUE 01

WHAT WE SAY NOW
The game plays the same as the NTSC version, but now you get a slightly slower *Ridge* in a box. Shocking really.

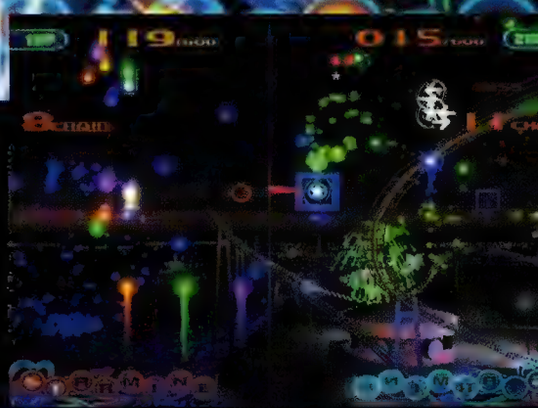
72

LAZY

DEVELOPER
Sony
PUBLISHER
SCEE
REVIEWED
PSM2#01
EXTRAS
1-2 Players, DualShock 2, Memory Card.
NEW FOR THE UK
Split-screen two-player mode.

FANTAVISION

Fireworks mightn't be everyone's idea of an innovative game scenario, but don't be put-off just yet...



As Sony's only launch title, *Fantavision* could well be a fine indicator of the lifestyle pretensions they have for PS2. Despite containing all the frantic item-combining normally associated with puzzle games, it's a decidedly mellow experience, full of pretty lights and nice views – and now you can share it with a friend. Two-player *Fantavision*, then, revolves around the moveable dividing line separating your fireworks from those of your opponent. The basic idea is to restrict your competitor's detonating area by setting off elaborate strings yourself, but it's made much more complicated by the side-reversing bonuses that frequently appear. It's not quite as satisfying as the likes of *Super Bust-A-Move* – there's something sadistically fulfiling about crushing someone under an avalanche of bubbles – but it's spirited fun all the same. Also, it lacks the glorious simplicity of classics like *Tetris* – linking the coloured fireworks is easy enough, but try explaining three-level Daisy Chains to prospective opponents, and you'll be met with a vacant stare. Finally, the Analogue controls aren't exactly precise, which can make for an exasperating end to a frantic game.

As one of the few import games to be radically enhanced for launch, then, *Fantavision*'s something of a disappointment – the game's nature never really lends itself to that 'One more go' rivalry, and the 40 quid price tag's ridiculous. Still, it's the most ambitious puzzler you'll see for a while, and it'll calm you down a treat after the launch frenzy. **PSM2**

ISSUE 01

WHAT WE SAY NOW
Loads of extra points for the two-player mode, but they all come straight back off for the 40 quid price tag.

85
EXPLOSIVE

ISS

It's not quite the next-gen gob-smacker we'd anticipated.

DEVELOPER
KCEO
PUBLISHER
Konami
REVIEWED
PSM2#01
EXTRAS
1-8 Players, DualShock 2, Memory Card, MultiTap 2

NEW FOR THE UK
Konami's acquisition of the FIFPro license allows real player names.
Optimised running speed and smoother gameplay.
Ninety-eight International Teams, plus All-Star sides.
Awesome replay mode, with the ability to save goals.
Six stadiums, four weather conditions and day/evening/night matches.
Ten game speeds and five difficulty levels.
Flexible game camera with ten levels of height, zoom and perspective.

Poor old *ISS*. The UK version delivers the one thing it was missing – real player names – and *FIFA* goes one better with its accurate team graphics. Konami's football ace can draw solace from the fact that gameplay is a lot harder to imitate than Roy Keane's grimacing mug.

The irritating slowdown of the Japanese version is gone and the game feels a lot tighter as a result. The dynamics are still based on the N64 version and not *ISS: Pro Evo*, so tactics have been slightly neutralised by increased player trickery. The fun but frustrating Analogue shots seem to be more forgiving, so at least you'll get more goals than a Steve Bruce highlights video. More than can be said for the frequent stalemates in the Japanese version.

Where *ISS* really shines is in the realism. It shows more special touches in one match than Zinedine Zidane gets in a season. Watch out for irate linesmen and defenders protesting their innocence after elbowing a striker into the reserve side. There's still as many tactical options as ever to tweak, though their effect is less noticeable.

It's a bit like the Premiership. *ISS*, like Manchester United, is still the best team although it looks shakier than ever. The increase in atmosphere still lags behind the imperious *FIFA* series. Thankfully, for Konami, this is still the first stop for fans of free-flowing football.

If you need to see *ISS* and *FIFA* head-to-head then check out PSM2#02, for a detailed analysis of both these giants. **PSM2**

ISSUE 01

WHAT WE SAY NOW
The King will need to deliver more than real player names to stay ahead of the game when the opposition wises up.

STOPGAP **82**

UK ROUND UP

We've reviewed the UK versions before but, a month on, how have they fared in the harsh spotlight of PSM2's glare.

SSX
DEVELOPER
EA Canada
PUBLISHER
Electronic Arts
REVIEWED IN
Issue 03
ESSENTIALS
1-2 Players, DualShock 2, Memory Card.

We flocked around it like giddy schoolgirls last month, and our infatuation hasn't dimmed with time. If anything, we've grown to love it even *more* – every fevered late-night play session's rewarded with a short-cut to shave precious seconds off our time. Even better, as other mags finally realise how great it is, they line up for the two-player trouncings we never tire of dishing out. It's the game that leaves our normally staunch work-ethic in tatters, and the launch title that you *have* to buy.

ISSUE 03 VERDICT 94

SMUGGLER'S RUN
DEVELOPER
Angel Studios
PUBLISHER
Take 2
REVIEWED IN
Issue 03
PRICE
£39.99
ESSENTIALS
1-2 Players, DualShock 2, Memory Card

One of the more unlikely games to show off the PS2's abilities – drive to the top of a hill, and the entire level stretches out below without a trace of fog. It's fairly nippy and the car physics are excellent. In terms of long-lasting appeal, it just edges in front of *Midnight Club* due to being sunny and having a furiously competitive two-player mode, although the novelty value of swapping cars between the two lasted about three seconds, so it's probably not worth buying both.

ISSUE 03 VERDICT 75

WILD WILD RACING
DEVELOPER
Rage Studios
PUBLISHER
Rage Studios
REVIEWED IN
Issue 03
ESSENTIALS
1-2 Players, DualShock 2, Memory Card

Basically a racing game, but with an odd structure that sees you collecting alphabet letters or pulling off Evil Knievel-style stunts to access the high performance cars you'll later need, *Wild Wild Racing* never fails to make good use of its impressive physics engine. Tiresomely long courses combine with one-wrong-turn-and-you're-hopelessly-lost design to make it less enjoyable than the free roamers. Still, it's an enjoyable, if not particularly enthralling dirt racer.

ISSUE 03 VERDICT 71

SILENT SCOPE
DEVELOPER
Konami
PUBLISHER
Konami
REVIEWED IN
Issue 03
ESSENTIALS
1-2 Players, DualShock 2, Memory Card

All the fun of shooting people from a long distance, combined with the hectic, time-constrained play you'd associate with an arcade game intent on draining all the change from your pockets. The game itself has been flawlessly converted, the control system works better than you'd dare expect, and there's a fearsomely difficult Training mode to up the replay value. As far as arcade conversions go, this is the best we've seen.

Still, over the last month we've lost interest quite a bit, since we can now complete it with no more than a virtual quid.

ISSUE 03 VERDICT 77

MIDNIGHT CLUB
DEVELOPER
Angel Studios
PUBLISHER
Rockstar Games
REVIEWED IN
Issue 01
ESSENTIALS
1-2 Players, DualShock 2, Memory Card.

We've already reviewed the UK version, so nothing's changed: drive around London and New York seeking illegal street races, not expecting to see very much. It's midnight see? After extended play the game still presents a challenge due to your rival's devious AI. The dizzy thrill of crashing through lampposts has eroded slightly, though we've discover a lot of new short-cuts in the process. The brash graphics have dated prematurely in comparison to the crisp car models of Kemco's *Top Gear Daredevil*. Yet for white-knuckle compulsion, *Midnight Club* still burns up the streets. And they *still* look dark.

ISSUE 03 VERDICT 72 **PSM2**

PERIOD DRAMA: Despite the action being set in the '60s the game has more of a WW2 feel, especially when you encounter this walking Churchill tank.

精密射撃

OUT UK APRIL 2001 JAPAN NOW

RING OF RED

Petrol driven mechs towering above a Cold War battlefield? It's more a case of external combustion engines when these leviathans open fire in an alternate history of post-war Japan. Time to torch the history books and start all over again...

REVIEWER: Jonathan Bryant

INFO

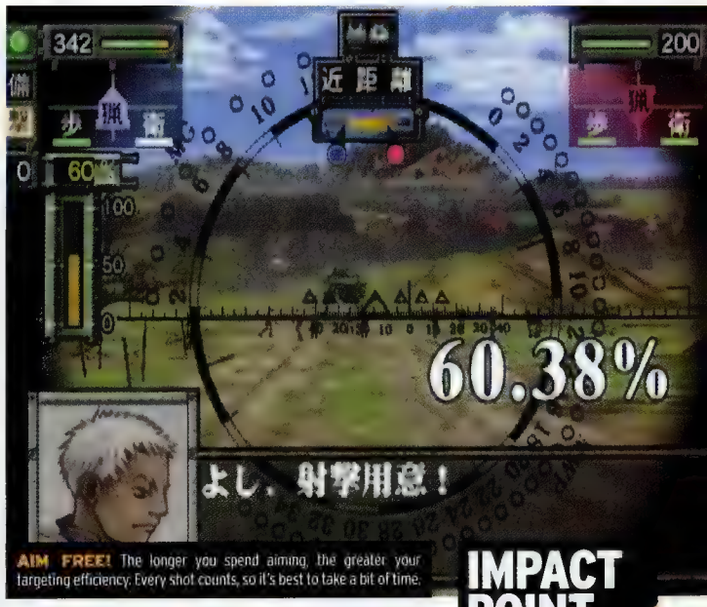
- **CODE TESTED** PAL (UK)
- **DEVELOPER** KCE Sapporo
- **PUBLISHER** Konami
- **GAME TYPE** Strategy
- **PRICE** ¥6,800 (see pg99)
- **ESSENTIALS** 1 Player, DualShock 2 Memory Card

DETAILS

- Six troop types
- Four Central Characters
- Eight AFWs

Unless you've got a PHD in Kanji, you'd best hang on for the English translation.

RING PEACE? Seeing an enemy AFW go up in flames, throwing dead troops everywhere, is special – and all in the name of peace!



AIM FREE! The longer you spend aiming, the greater your targeting efficiency. Every shot counts, so it's best to take a bit of time.

Picture the scene: it's the 1960s, but instead of swinging their pants to the hip chords of the Beach Boys, Japan's youth are battling it out in bloody civil war. The country's been divided into three regions. The northern island has broken away from the mainland which has been carved in half by the Russians and Americans. So it's Cokes all round for your team of Armoured Fighting Walkers (AFWs), the massive mechs which you ride into battle, while the enemy scowl from behind their vodka glasses.

Visually the whole thing has the kind of superior production values you'd associate with Konami. The AFW animations are fantastic, with everything having a convincingly lo-tech, steam punk feel. The pseudo-historical setting certainly gives the game a gritty atmosphere (there's even a bleak intro movie which cuts AFWs in with grim WW2 film footage).

Despite some heavy chrome buffing, when the game finally gets into its stride (after a couple of deadly dull training missions and a phenomenally hard one), you finally realise that you're in stylised *Front Mission* territory.

After a briefing from your superiors, it's off to do a bit of troop management, where you select three teams of ground troops to accompany your AFW into battle. The action hots up for the next stage as you access a top-down tactical map from which you control units as they advance towards designated targets. Finally, once one of your AFWs settles in a square opposite an enemy unit, the action switches to ground level on a 3D battlefield.

You could easily be put off by the earlier missions, where these battle scenes only have one combat option available plus the opportunity to advance, halt or retreat your AFW. But stick with it and the battles suddenly open up, along with a host of tactical variations. Rush an advance and close in for hand-to-hand combat, execute a special dodge manoeuvre, command foot soldiers to make up for your mech's shortcomings, or launch a long-range attack – there are plenty of skillful strategy options to experiment with.

It's here where things depart from the mech strategy games of the past, as everything happens in real-time. Each round of combat has a limit of 90 seconds, so it's up to you how best to manage your time. Waste valuable seconds lining up shots – increasing your hit ratio – and you could find that the enemy has already launched several attacks. Not only that, but once you've fired a shell, it takes your AFW a vast amount of time to re-prime its weapon for a second round – which is the game's major failing.

MECH LOVE?

All credit to Konami for coming up with something truly original, but this falls in a weird no-man's-land somewhere between the total command of *Warzone 2100* and the up-close and personal tactics of the *Front Mission* series. Everything's too pedestrian for our tastes, which is a shame – we were really looking forward to this...

Expect the UK version in [illegible]

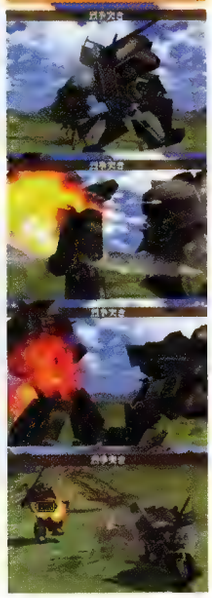
WALKER'S CRISP: Select you long range weapon and your AFW starts a top class animation as it braces itself for the recoil.

GRUNT MITCHELL: Your two teams of ground troops can be advanced or withdrawn, depending on how the fight's going.

SMELLS LIKE TEAM SPIRIT: Get you troop movements wrong and you could find one of your AFWs outnumbered three to one!

IMPACT POINT

Ring of Red's Impact Point comes as your AFW pegs it across the battlefield for a bit of mechanised fisticuffs with a rival mech. The nasty piece of work shown below not only has a devastating punch combo, but follows things up with an armour-mangling final cannon blast. Christ.



"THE ARMOURED FIGHTING WALKER ANIMATIONS ARE FANTASTIC, WITH EVERYTHING HAVING A CONVINCINGLY LO-TECH, STEAM PUNK FEEL"

INSIGHT

- This is a strong first title from KCE Sapporo (http://www.kcestudios.com/red/) – looks like Square'll have a major mechanised scrap on their hands if *Front Mission* goes next-gen.
- The game starts on September 9th, 1964 – Hugh Grant's birthday as it happens (the English fop-meister would have been busy being four).

STRATEGIST'S CHOICE

1 **RING OF RED**
Attractive with some innovative ideas, but not quite the immersive experience we expected.

2 **FRONT MISSION 3**
Turn-based mech strategy on PSone that benefits from upgrades.

3 **KESSEN**
The English translation promises similar levels of troop ordering when it hits these shores some time in December.

PSM2 VERDICT

GAMEPLAY
+ Plodding to start with, but quickly picks up pace and interest.
- Could be a bit too 'on the rails' and restrictive for some tastes.

GRAPHICS
+ The design team have put some serious work in on this.
- Events look beautiful, but you feel distanced from the action.

SOUND
+ Lots of atmospheric judders, buzzes and whirrs
- The music only kicks in during the intro footage for each chapter

LIFESPAN
+ This could eat up weeks of your life.
- You may well get bored of the repetition in mission structure.

OVERALL
Visually explosive, but, sadly, you still feel a bit like a lackey of the game's engine rather than its commander.

74
GARGANTUAN

BRAKE FAST: Out-breaking your rivals on the corner's the way to pull ahead of them.

OUT UK FEBRUARY JAPAN NOW

MOTO GP

PS2 gamers in Japan are currently quaking to the thundering roar of 500cc bikes. *Moto GP* shows a triumphant return to racing form for one of Japan's premier development teams. Fantastic! **REVIEWER:** Marcus Hawkins

Namco's finished *Moto GP* code's come a long, long way since the early version PSM2 got to grips with earlier this year. Gone is the sticky handling and the one-paced 'flip-flop' animation of the 500cc bikes and their riders, and in its place is a flowing, rewarding motorbike racer that's captivated most of the PSM2 team for weeks.

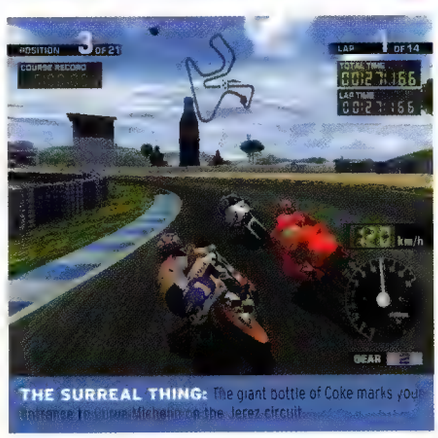
Motorbike sims aren't for everyone though. Despite the fact this is a PS2 enhanced version of Namco's *500GP* coin-op, and the option-packed front-end is as friendly as you'd expect, the game doesn't really have a 'pick up and play' feel. It's a racer in which mistakes are punished harder than most, and it's all the better for it.

The game's five racing modes are all entertaining, although, as a single player you'll find yourself spending the majority of your time slicing off hundreths of a second in Time Trial and unlocking the secret riders, photos and circuits in the supremely balanced Challenge mode. In fact, we've found the game more rewarding for the lone gamer rather than two (taking on each other's best lap 'trail image' in Time Trial is actually a great deal more entertaining than the split-screen Versus mode itself.

It's the little touches, the features

INSIGHT

Namco have set up an Official Time Attack Contest for *Moto GP* on their Japanese website *(http://www.namco.co.jp/home/cs/ps2/motogp/ranking/index.html)*. Some of the current times are frightening.



THE SURREAL THING: The giant bottle of Coke marks your entrance to circuit Michelin on the Jerez circuit.

INFO

- **CODE TESTED** NTSC (JAP)
- **DEVELOPER** Namco
- **PUBLISHER** Namco
- **GAME TYPE** Motorbike Racing
- **PRICE** ¥6,800 (see pg99)
- **ESSENTIALS** 1-2 Players, Memory Card, DualShock 2

PlayStation.2

DETAILS

- 32 motorbikes.
- Ten tracks (five of them need to be unlocked).
- Five racing modes.

Nah, no real problem here – you even get small photos of the other riders floating above their bikes. It's the international language of speed...

MOVIN' ON UP: The start of a ten lap marathon and things are shaping up remarkably well. The field's packed with bikes in *Moto GP*

IMPACT POINT

There are many points of impact in *Moto GP*, but leaning into your first corner, tucking in tightly to the curve and coming out of it on the racing line, all without resorting to pedestrian speed, has to rank as one of the most memorable. Get it right, and you can feel on top of the world...

"YOU'LL GO NUTS FOR THE VARIETY OF AUTHENTIC CAMERA POSITIONS, WITH TARMAC-LEVEL CORNER CAMS BOBBLING IN THE WAKE OF THE BIKES"

that have such 'blink and you miss 'em' subtlety which, layer upon layer, help to take *Moto GP* into another league, though.

Take the replay for instance – you'll go nuts for the variety of authentic camera positions, with tarmac-level corner cams bobbling in the wake of the bikes flashing past and the vibrating helicopter camera accompanied by the high-pitched whirr of blades as heard in the cockpit. Fantastic stuff.

There's some spot-on animation and sound effects going on in the game as well. Listen out for the air horns as you burn past the crowds. Watch your rear tyre slither about as you fight for the correct speed around a biting corner, your rider shifting his weight around on the saddle. Grimace in mock pain as your bike cartwheels into a crash barrier, your man lying limp and seemingly lifeless. The collisions really are convincingly meaty.

SHITTY BITS

So what of *Moto GP*'s shortcomings? Well, the punishing level of challenge will clearly put off your casual, weekend gamer. *Moto GP* is a racing game that demands your concentration right from the time you hit the first corner in your inaugural race. Scream into that bend at crazy speed and watch the rest of the entire field peel away as you wrestle for control of your twitching bike ploughing through the gravel trap. The learning curve's about as gentle as Eminem on a bender, and you'll need to devote more time to learning the nuances of control here than in any other PS2 racer so far.

"It's a bit dull, isn't it?" one nameless videogame journalist asked of PSM2. Well, yes, the lack of long straights to open up the throttle on, and the frequent 'nudgey-nudge-nudge' nature of negotiating corners on a two-wheeled devil-horse might be too much of a drag for some.

The tracks themselves – through no fault of their own – are indeed all pretty samey. They're flat and surrounded by lakes of grass and sand. The on-screen information can also clutter your view a bit too much at times – attempting to overtake on a left-hand bend as the distracting split-time details appear is *very* frustrating.

FACE OFF: Overtaking a world-class 500cc racer is even more difficult, thanks to the flying mugshots above their bikes

Fair enough, so it doesn't offer the visceral powersliding thrill of *Gran Turismo* or the instant accessibility of *Ridge Racer 5*. But if you're prepared to invest hours of your time in *Moto GP*, it's a game that keeps on giving. **PSM2**

Moto GP is available now in NTSC format the UK PAL version will be out in February

FOGGY'S CHOICE

1 **MOTO GP**
The only motorbike racing game on PS2 sets the benchmark.

2 **RIDGE RACER 5**
If you crave speed, Namco's first PlayStation 2 racer has to be second on your list (although it's far from as good as some other mags think it is).

3 **MIDNIGHT CLUB**
Entertaining in two-player, although it's all a bit dark, being midnight and all.

PSM2 VERDICT

GAMEPLAY
+ Realistic handling with an arcade twist.
- Switch on 'Sim' – it becomes tough and not 'fun' anymore

GRAPHICS
+ Beautiful touches – watch riders turn their heads to look at you.
- All that detail blurring past is a little too much for some eyes.

SOUND
+ Throaty bike sounds. Lovely.
- The music's just OK

LIFESPAN
+ Lots of secrets to unlock for the single-player.
- Seen one track, seen 'em all? Possibly.

OVERALL
A racing experience for the discerning gamer. Convincing handling and gorgeous details. But it's more demanding than most.

80

EXHAUSTING

LAST ISSUE'S REVIEWS

Accurate and honest – the games we reviewed last issue... **SCORE**

G-SAVIOUR **39**
The mighty clash of mechs should be exciting, but severe tactical short-fallings and some terrible gameplay glitches reduce this to a dull and surprisingly slow, shoot-em-up.

KEYBOARDMANIA **63**
Rather than being a *Parappa*-ish, forgiving kind of music game *KeyboardMania* aims for the serious side of the market, and in doing so manages to be dead hard. If you learned the piano as a nipper it might be a lot easier. The keyboard peripheral makes it a bit on the pricey side, too.

MIDNIGHT CLUB **72**
Illegal street racing makes its way through New York and London, with some nice touches of detail. A laudable effort compromised by reality-check graphics and overly familiar characters. Dark skies mask bright, shameless fun.

SILENT SCOPE **77**
The sniping-against-the-clock classic loses its huge rifle peripheral and downsizes to PS2. Thrilling to begin with, and brilliantly converted from the arcade, but short, sharp play won't keep you buzzing indefinitely.

SMUGGLER'S RUN **75**
Running anything from radioactive materials to Ming vases, *Smuggler's Run* sprawls over a vast playing area and utilises some superb physics in its vehicle handling. Technically jaw-dislocating, but there's not enough one-player depth to turn infatuation into ever-lasting love. Fun, but frustrating.

SILPHEED **51**
A firework of a 3D scrolling blast-em-up that uses cut-scenes effectively to spice-up the non-action. *Silpheed* burns bright to the bitter, but quickly finished, end, leaving a husky shell with no long term appeal.

SSX **94**
SSX does for PS2 what *WipEout* did for PSone. And then some. While everyone will enjoy it, other's will take it to their hearts. Simply quite breathtaking.

WILD WILD RACING **71**
Immensely fun in places, but maddening in others, with a little more thought and time *Wild Wild Racing* could've been a contender.

THE SILVER LINING

PSM2 rates games harder than most games mags, so you might find our scores comparatively low. But we don't want you to splash out £40 (or more on import) for titles that just don't cut it. Stick with us and you know you're getting the best PlayStation 2 buying advice around.

PRICE CONVERTER

Where game prices are listed in Yen (¥), visit the link below for a direct currency conversion. Bear in mind, though, that this is the price you'd pay in Japan – expect to pay between 50 70 quid for most PS2 games through reputable UK importers.

http://www.xe.net/currency/full/

DVD

BLADE RUNNER: Crowe's never upstaged by the set-pieces and scenery in Scott's admirable Roman epic.

FAST FACTS ABOUT DVD VIDEO

1 DVD stands for Digital Versatile Disc.
2 A DVD disc offers double the picture resolution of VHS – 500 line as opposed to 250 lines.
3 DVD delivers widescreen, so no more nasty panned and scanned film transfers.
4 DVD reproduces DTS and Dolby Digital surround sound at cinema sound quality.
5 DVD discs can't suffer a loss of quality from numerous viewings.
6 DVD players will also play CDs and Video-CDs.
7 DVD players in the UK play Region Two discs. US Imports are Region One. Annoyingly.

OUT UK now

GLADIATOR

The blade falls, the blood flies and the crowds go mental as Russell Crowe prepares to get Ancient Roman on yer ass...

REVIEWER: Dan Jolin

STARRING Russell Crowe, Joaquin Phoenix, Connie Neilsen, Oliver Reed, Richard Harris, DJimon Hounsou
DIRECTOR Ridley Scott
CERTIFICATE 15
PRICE £24.99

Those were the days – when heroes were real men, movie sets were gigantic and we literally did have a cast of thousands. We're talking about the days of Spartacus, El Cid and vast Cecil B DeMille-esque silver-screen fillers. There's no denying that a desire to rediscover the Hollywood historical epic fuelled the immense box-office success of Ridley Scott's gory, gutsy sword 'n' sandaler: Gladiator.

BATTLE SCREENS

As this chunky, double-disc pack reveals (in a 25-minute Making Of featurette), it was the rapid advancement of computer graphic effects which allowed the Blade Runner helmer to not only fill the Colosseum, but to rebuild the teeming metropolis of the Roman capital – layering huge viaducts, towering columns and people-packed forums to great visual effect.

If you're dubious about the impact of these CG-summoned vistas on the small screen, don't worry, because the crisp, digital, widescreen picture easily compensates for the shrinkage of the vision. Indeed, you'll probably find that the reduction even improves the experience, especially during the ferocious battle scenes. Scott's technique – which is remarkably similar to that employed by Steven Spielberg in Saving Private Ryan – is to heighten the sense of mid-frenzy chaos by playing with the camera's shutter speed. On the big screen, this created a sense of disorientation which could often distract from the thrill of the fight, but on the smaller screen, the disorientation is minimised and the thrills increased.

CROWE FOR GOLD

From the opening, "unleashing of Hell" in Germania (witness the sky filling with fiery arrows, then hit the pause to catch your breath), to the first major Colosseum clash – which sees Roman General-turned-gladiator Maximus (Russell Crowe) wrecking chariots left, right and centre – right through to the final, one-on-one confrontation with his nemesis, Commodus (Joaquin Phoenix), there's enough heart-in-mouth action to warrant regular, repeated viewings. Admittedly, the central plot's fairly flimsy – fallen hero returns to wreak vengeance on the man who killed his wife and kid – but, thankfully, the performances are enough to match the blood 'n' guts spectacle. Joaquin Phoenix makes a great love-to-hate-him bad guy as the cowardly and snivelling young Emperor Commodus, while Oliver Reed snarls and sneers as gladiator trainer Proximo. But, unsurprisingly, it's Russell Crowe who steals the arena, establishing his credentials as an A-list big-screen hero.

Strength and honour, indeed. PSM2

INSIGHT

- Burly boozer Oliver Reed sadly kicked the bucket mid-shoot – his later appearances in the movie come courtesy of a body double and some smart CG trickery.
- More than 2,000 weapons and 6,000 arrows were created for the production.
- The real-life Commodus was in fact the only Emperor to fight in the arena himself – although he did it several times before being strangled to death in his dressing room by an athlete named Narcissus.

SANDAL STOMPER'S CHOICE

1 **GLADIATOR:** Roman action for the new millennium. Gutsy and gory.
2 **SPARTACUS:** Not on DVD in the UK yet, but still a gladiatorial classic.
3 **JASON AND THE ARGONAUTS:** Myths 'n' monsters, Ray Harryhausen stop-motion style.

PSM2 VERDICT

EXTRAS

Commentary with Ridley Scott, DoP John Mathieson and editor Pietro Scalia Both Dolby Digital 5.1 and DTS soundtracks Gladiator Games 50-minute documentary on real-life gladiators Making Of Gladiator 25-minute documentary Making The Music For Gladiator 25-minute Hans Zimmer profile Storyboard comparisons Spencer Treat Clark's production journal Pietro's Treasure Chest Best of deleted footage montage Production notes Trailers and more

OVERALL

The effects are amazing, Crowe is inspiring, and the extras provide plenty of entertainment. Gladiator, we salute you.

90

THUMBS UP

Kobal Collection/Boutindijk, Jaap/Dreamworks/Universal

OUT UK NOVEMBER 27

TOY STORY COLLECTOR'S EDITION

The Toys are back with a DVD so cool you'll want to believe in Santa again...

REVIEWER: Dan Jolin

STEER AS FOLK: Woody rides again in Toy Story 2.

STARRING ..... Tom Hanks, Tim Allen, Don Rickles, Jim Varney, Wallace Shawn, Kelsey Grammer, Joan Cusack, Pete Postlethwaite
DIRECTOR ..... John Lasseter
CERTIFICATE ..... U
PRICE £49.99

Life. What's it all about? Well, you wouldn't expect to find the answer in a pair of kids' 'toons about toys who come alive. Indeed, you wouldn't even expect a question like that to be *asked* in such movies. But this is what separates Toy Story from just about every other cartoon feature.

IDENTITOY CRISIS

So, what *is* it all about? Without wanting to get too deep, it's clear that both Toy Storys are about existential angst – bear with us. The first introduces us to Buzz Lightyear (voiced with mock-heroic gusto by Tim "Galaxy Quest" Allen), who believes he's a real space explorer, rather than a commercially produced plaything with a made-up background. Then, in one genuinely upsetting scene, we see Buzz realising that he's just one of many millions of plastic figures as he catches a commercial for himself on TV.

The glorious sequel, meanwhile, shifts the focus to carved cowboy Woody (Tom Hanks), who's kidnapped by a corpulent toy enthusiast and discovers that he's actually a very rare collector's item, originally made as a merchandising spin-off for a cheesy '50s kid's show. When he meets bitter cowgirl Jessie (Joan Cusack), she relates how heartbreaking it is to be forgotten by your owner when they grow up – which will inevitably happen to Woody when his owner, Andy, hits his teen years. Hence it's better to be appreciated and never played with than simply forgotten and never played with...

INSIGHT

- Spookily, the carpet texture in Sid's house in Toy Story is exactly the same as that in the hotel in The Shining.
- The Buzz character was originally going to be the tin soldier from Pixar's early Tin Toy short.
- Toy Story 2 was intended as a straight-to-video release, but Disney was so impressed with the test scenes that it upped the budget and aimed it at the big screen.
- The baggage handler at the climatic end of TS2 is voiced by Channel 4's teen-tyke supremo Andy Peters.

Of course, there're plenty of laughs and action in both movies, too. Animated adventures rarely come better than this.

OK, so A Bug's Life bettered Toy Story in terms of lush visuals and Antz played up the adult-pleasing satire, but neither combined action, comedy and an amazing voice-cast so deftly. And with this box-set, you get the best of everything. It is a bit pricey, but we really do think it's worth the money. **PSM2**

TOY COLLECTOR'S CHOICE

1 **TOY STORY 2**
Arguably better than the original, for sheer visual verve..

2 **TOY STORY**
Genuine "for all the family" entertainment, with as much for the adults as for the kids.

PSM2 VERDICT

EXTRAS
Audio commentary by the film-makers . Two Making Of features . On-set interviews . Tin Toy and Luxo Jr animated shorts . Plus much more than we've space to list here...

OVERALL
If you're bothered by the price, then stick it on yer Christmas list, because The Ultimate Toy Box is yet another must-have disc.

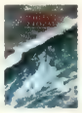
94

MAXI-PACK

THE PERFECT STORM

OUT UK NOVEMBER 27

STARRING ..... George Clooney, Mark Wahlberg, John C Reilley
DIRECTOR ..... Wolfgang Peterson
CERTIFICATE 15
PRICE ..... £19.99 (Box-set with novel: £22.99)



The Perfect Storm must have sounded like the perfect pitch: a fishing boat and its crew head into the worst storm this century – never to return. Even better, this tragic event really happened, surely making for a heart-rendingly true-to-life drama. Right? Wrong. While The Perfect Storm doesn't let you down in terms of spectacle (Das Boot director Peterson portrays the sea as the kind of towering, fearsome monster that'd make Godzilla cack his lizard-pants), it sinks like a lead battleship when it comes to character, dialogue and plot. **PSM2** **55**

RAGING BULL 20TH ANNIVERSARY EDITION

OUT UK NOW

STARRING ..... Robert De Niro, Joe Pesci
DIRECTOR ..... Martin Scorsese
CERTIFICATE 18
PRICE £19.99

As far as boxing flicks go, nothing KO's Raging Bull. Shot in stark black-and-white, and featuring De Niro's best performance (his weight-gaining method acting won him an Oscar), Scorsese's biopic of middleweight champ Jake La Motta has the same impact it had two decades ago.

Distributor MGM have appropriately celebrated the film's 20th birthday with a thoughtfully crafted double-discer, including an interview with La Motta. Even if this isn't your favourite Scorsese, it certainly deserves a place next to those Taxi Driver and GoodFellas discs. **PSM2** **91**

ALSO RELEASED

RESERVOIR DOGS
Released Out Now **Cert** 18 **Price** £19.99
Tarantino's scorching, ear-slicin' debut finally goes digital, but don't expect much in the way of extras. Tarantino contributes an introduction. **PSM2** **88**

STUART LITTLE
Released November 27 **Cert** U **Price** £19.99
There's plenty of cutesy, CG family fun in this tale of an ultra-nice couple who decide to adopt a mouse. Perhaps too schmaltzy for some. **PSM2** **70**

THE MAN WITH THE GOLDEN GUN: SPECIAL EDITION
Released November 27 **Cert** PG **Price** £19.99
The Bond DVD-release season plods on, now well into cheesy Roger Moore territory. **PSM2** **76**

SPAGHETTI WESTERNS BOX-SET
Released Out Now **Cert** 18 **Price** £29.9
Fistful Of Dollars, For A Few Dollars More, The Good, The Bad And The Ugly – three of the best Westerns ever made. **PSM2** **92**

INTRODUCING...
Dan Jolin is Reviews Editor on Total Film, the magazine for people who love reading about movies as much as going to see them. The mag's packed with the latest Hollywood news, interviews and more, and is in the shops now...
www.totalfilm.co.uk

COMING SOON

THE BEACH
27th November
£19.99

ANGEL HEART
27th November
£19.99

CHICKEN RUN
4th December
£19.99

Kobal Collection/United Artist ■ Kobal Collection/Barius, Claudette/Warner Bros

REVIEWS

THE ESSENTIAL **PSM2** VERDICT ON EVERY NEW RELEASE

Anamorphic widescreen: Where the picture only has to expand horizontally to fill a widescreen TV, maintaining quality.

50 DVDS YOU MUST SEE!

Want to know what to watch when cramp finally sets in? Rob Tribe, Editor of What DVD? picks 50 of the UK's best discs.

7TH VOYAGE OF SINBAD

Certificate ..... U
Price £19.99
Sound ..... Stereo
Picture ..... Anamorphic widescreen 1.85:1

You may have seen it thousands of times before, and the effects may look dated, but this disc pays homage to the master of the '60s effects business, Ray Harryhausen, with not only the enjoyable movie, but a wealth of documentary material.

SELECTED EXTRAS:
The Ray Harryhausen Chronicles
Stop motion featurette

83

A BUG'S LIFE

Certificate ..... U
Price £19.99
Sound ..... Dolby Digital
Picture ..... Anamorphic widescreen 2.35:1

Excellent computer animated tale from Pixar. It's not easy being an ant, and when your whole future is threatened by an angry Grasshopper, voiced by Kevin Spacey at his most villainous, it's is time to get out into the big wide world and find some help.

SELECTED EXTRAS:
Outtakes

80

ABYSS: SPECIAL EDITION

Certificate 12
Price £19.99
Sound ..... Dolby Digital
Picture ..... Anamorphic widescreen 2.35:1

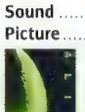
Ed Harris and Elizabeth Mastrantonio patch up their troubled marriage while battling intense conditions and meeting aliens on the bottom of the ocean. OK, so it's not available in the UK yet (sorry), but it's one of the best feature-packed DVDs ever – demand it's release today!

SELECTED EXTRAS:
Sonar Spy, Valve Control and ROV Pilot interactive videogames
Screenplay to storyboard animations
Under Pressure making of documentary

75

ALIEN

Certificate 18
Price £19.99
Sound ..... Dolby Digital
Picture ..... Anamorphic widescreen 2.35:1



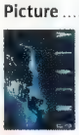
Still as powerful today as it was 20 years ago, Ridley Scott's outer-space terror tale has stood the test of time well. Sigourney Weaver and the rest of the crew of the Nostromo go to hell and back when an alien comes crashing in on their lives.

SELECTED EXTRAS:
Director's commentary
Deleted scenes

91

ALIENS

Certificate 18
Price £19.99
Sound ..... Dolby Digital
Picture ..... Anamorphic widescreen 1.85.1



James Cameron adds action to Ridley Scott's science fiction/horror combo and turns out a brilliant movie. Being different enough from the first film, but just as enjoyable, this goes against the grain of making sequels.

SELECTED EXTRAS:
Interview with James Cameron
Behind the scenes documentary

90

APOLLO 13

Certificate ..... PG
Price £19.99
Sound ..... Dolby Digital
Picture ..... Anamorphic widescreen 2.35:1

When Ron Howard was Richie Cunningham, who thought he would make a film as powerful, and flag-waving, as this? Tom Hanks and his all-star crew (Bill Paxman and Kevin Bacon) take the ill-fated Apollo 13 up into space, but find getting it back to Earth a quite different matter. Tense survival drama in zero-G, this is definitely made out of the 'right stuff'.

SELECTED EXTRAS:
Director's commentary
James Lovell commentary

82

AUSTIN POWERS: INTERNATIONAL MAN OFMYSTERY

Certificate 15
Price £22.99
Sound ..... Dolby Digital
Picture ..... Anamorphic widescreen 2.35:1

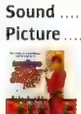
An original comedy from Mike Myers who plays a Sixties' sleuth brought forward in time to do battle with arch nemesis Dr Evil – Myers again. Gags by the bucket load, and more parodies than you can shake a stick at.

SELECTED EXTRAS:
Deleted scenes
Alternative endings
Director's commentary

72

AUSTIN POWERS 2: THE SPY WHO SHAGGED ME

Certificate 12
Price £19.99
Sound ..... Dolby Digital
Picture ..... Anamorphic widescreen 2.35:1



A sequel that works for once? No, not really, but a damn good DVD. Thank God Myers is so talented, because without him this would be about as funny as a midget biting you in the nuts, which, ironically, is the funniest bit of the film.

SELECTED EXTRAS:
Commentary
Deleted scenes
Behind the scenes film

58

BEING JOHN MALKOVICH

Certificate.....15
Price.....£19.99
Sound.....Dolby Digital
Picture.....Anamorphic widescreen 1.85:1

A slice of the surreal from Spike Jonze. What would it be like if you could spend time in the head of John Malkovich? Find out as John Cusak and Cameron Diaz do just that. Weird, but decidedly brilliant.

SELECTED EXTRAS:
Spoof documentary
Interview with director

92

BLADE

Certificate.....18
Price.....£19.99
Sound.....Dolby Digital
Picture.....Anamorphic widescreen 2.35:1

Kris Kristofferson has been killing vampires for years with his music, now he gets to team up with Wesley Snipes to do it the old fashioned way. Full of blood, cool weaponry and strange transformations. Good Friday night viewing.

SELECTED EXTRAS:
Deleted scenes
Designing Blade

67

THE BLAIR WITCH PROJECT

Certificate.....15
Price.....£19.99
Sound.....Sound
Picture.....Full screen

As the sequel disappears without a trace, the original movie is just that: original. There're loads of extras on this DVD which make it worth owning, because with shaky picture and crappy sound, you won't want it for the quality.

SELECTED EXTRAS:
Curse of the Blair Witch documentary
New footage

81

BUENA VISTA SOCIAL CLUB

Certificate.....E
Price.....£19.99
Sound.....Dolby Digital
Picture.....Anamorphic widescreen 1.85:1

Music Cuban style with these tuneful old-timers. Wim Wenders' studied documentary on Cuban music, musicians and their almost religious fanaticism for getting together for a jam is wonderfully done.

SELECTED EXTRAS:
Director's commentary
Deleted scenes

86

DEEP BLUE SEA

Certificate.....15
Price.....£19.99
Sound.....Dolby Digital
Picture.....Anamorphic widescreen 2.35:1

Samuel Jackson, Saffron Burrows and LL Cool J all get trapped on an aquatic research station when their genetically modified sharks take the place over. Good fun, but the show is stolen by the CGI killer fish.

SELECTED EXTRAS:
Commentary
Shark documentary

69

DESPERADO

Certificate.....18
Price.....£19.99
Sound.....Stereo
Picture.....Anamorphic widescreen 1.85:1

Get this high-octane Robert Rodriguez alongside his cheaper, but better, original El Mariachi on the same disc to get the full picture behind this mix of morality, guns and male bravado.

SELECTED EXTRAS:
Director's commentary
Short 'making of' film

65

EAST IS EAST

Certificate.....15
Price.....£19.99
Sound.....Dolby Digital
Picture.....Anamorphic widescreen 1.78:1

Top class British comedy worth about ten Full Monty's. Om Puri presides over an Asian family adapting to a more frivolous way of life after emigrating to Britain in the 1970s. Very funny, but in turn tragic at times.

SELECTED EXTRAS:
Director's commentary
Deleted scenes

84

ELIZABETH

Certificate.....15
Price.....£17.99
Sound.....Dolby Digital
Picture.....Anamorphic widescreen 1.85:1

Eric Cantona might do his best to ruin this movie, but thankfully his parts are small (or so we're told). The movie, about the reign of Elizabeth I, is carried by Cate Blanchett's performance, and a great supporting cast.

SELECTED EXTRAS:
Interviews
Making of documentary
Behind the scenes

86

THE EXORCIST

Certificate.....18
Price.....£15.99
Sound.....Dolby Digital
Picture.....Anamorphic widescreen 1.85:1

Head-spinning, vomit-spewing and hey, that's just the audience reaction to this shocker. Banned over here because it was considered too horrific, you can buy it now and realise just how misguided the BBFC really were.

SELECTED EXTRAS:
Fear of God documentary
Interviews plus original ending

87

FIGHT CLUB

Certificate.....18
Price.....£24.99
Sound.....Dolby Digital
Picture.....Anamorphic widescreen 2.40:1

A cerebral dissertation on the male psyche of the new millennium, or a bunch of pretentious arse? Still, it's an incredible DVD, whatever your opinion of the film might be.

SELECTED EXTRAS:
Behind the scenes
Director's commentary
Deleted scenes

98

GHOSTBUSTERS

Certificate.....PG
Price.....£19.99
Sound.....Dolby Digital
Picture.....Anamorphic widescreen 2.35:1

Who you gonna call? Probably the old people's home given the age of this comedy. But when a classic is a classic, you can't deny its... er, classicness. Still as funny today as it was then, and beautifully presented on DVD.

SELECTED EXTRAS:
Visual commentary
Storyboard comparison

86

GIRL, INTERRUPTED

Certificate.....15
Price.....£15.99
Sound.....Dolby Digital
Picture.....Anamorphic widescreen 1.85:1

Likened to One Flew Over The Cuckoo's Nest, but from a female perspective, Girl, Interrupted stars Angelina Jolie and Wynona Ryder who form an alliance when they meet in a nut house.

SELECTED EXTRAS:
Deleted scenes with commentary
Isolated Music score

68

GLADIATOR

Certificate.....15
Price.....£19.99
Sound.....Dolby Digital
Picture.....Anamorphic widescreen 1.85:1

Ridley Scott's visual flare hits pay dirt in this Roman epic. Russel Crow has a suitably solid presence as the embattled gladiator of the title while Joaquin Pheonix oozes political calculation and menace. Cracking stuff.

SELECTED EXTRAS:
Director's commentary
Documentary on real gladiators
Gladiatorial videogames

92

GODS AND MONSTERS

Certificate.....15
Price.....£19.99
Sound.....Dolby Digital
Picture.....Anamorphic widescreen 1.85:1

Liked American Beauty? Well, check this out if you did. It may not have had the huge acclaim of the Sam Mendes movie, but its gentle story of the last days of English director James Whale, is still as touching.

SELECTED EXTRAS:
Director's commentary
Documentary

86

HEAT

Certificate.....15
Price.....£15.99
Sound.....Dolby Digital
Picture.....Anamorphic widescreen 1.85:1

De Niro and Pacino set the big screen on fire in this Michael Mann's seminal remake of his own LA Takedown. This is cops and robbers on an explosive scale and has one of the most impressive gun battles ever seen in a film.

SELECTED EXTRAS:
Scene access

90

JAWS

Certificate.....12
Price.....£19.99
Sound.....Dolby Digital
Picture.....Anamorphic widescreen 2.35:1

Something to get your teeth into, or vice versa. Classic tale of woman meets shark, shark eats woman, mayor refuses to close beaches, Roy Scheider saves the day.

SELECTED EXTRAS:
Making of documentary
Deleted scenes
Outtakes

95

JURASSIC PARK

Certificate.....PG
Price.....£19.99
Sound.....Dolby Digital
Picture.....Anamorphic widescreen 1.85:1

Steven Spielberg may have taken liberties with Michael Crichton's cautionary tale of playing God with evolution, but it still has some classic moments of suspense. The groundbreaking CGI velociraptors captured the imagination, even if the frail story-telling didn't.

SELECTED EXTRAS:
Making of documentary
Early test footage
Pre-production meetings

92

LA CONFIDENTIAL

Certificate.....15
Price.....£15.99
Sound.....Dolby Digital
Picture.....Anamorphic widescreen 2.35:1

Certainly one of the best films of the '90s, this is film noir done in a way that Hollywood hasn't been able to do since Humphrey Bogart donned Sam Spade's raincoat. Guy Pearce, Russell Crowe and Kevin Spacey are all equally good as the men who bring down a corrupt LA Police Force. Truly fantastic.

SELECTED EXTRAS:
Behind the scenes documentary
Music only track
Interactive map of LA

92

LOST IN SPACE

Certificate.....PG
Price.....£19.99
Sound.....Dolby Digital
Picture.....Anamorphic widescreen 1.78:1

The TV programme that stretched the imagination in the '50s got brought up to date with a little help from Gary Oldman, Joey from Friends and some great special effects. Surprisingly a lot better than it should have been, however the gaping holes in the plot and dire climax can still disappoint.

SELECTED EXTRAS:
Deleted scenes
SFX documentary

75

MAGNOLIA

Certificate.....18
Price.....£19.99
Sound.....Dolby Digital
Picture.....Anamorphic widescreen 2.35:1

Paul Thomas Anderson, the man who brought us Dirk Diggler's todger in Boogie Nights, gets stuck into even meatier substance in this excellent drama. Funny, long without feeling it and full to the brim with class actors (William Macy, Philip Seymour Hoffman and even Tom Cruise), this is a must-see movie.

SELECTED EXTRAS:
Outtakes
Making of video diary

90

THE MASK OF ZORRO

Certificate.....PG
Price.....£19.99
Sound.....Dolby Digital
Picture.....Anamorphic widescreen 2.35:1

It slipped in and out of the cinema with hardly anyone noticing, which is a shame because this version of the Zorro legend, with Antonio Banderas in the lead role, is a great action movie. Loads of swords, horses and pouting Catherine Zeta Jones, what more does a man need?

SELECTED EXTRAS:
Documentary
Alternative ending
Director's commentary

74

THE MATRIX

Certificate.....15
Price.....£19.99
Sound.....Dolby Digital
Picture.....Anamorphic widescreen 2.35:1

What is the Matrix? Forget the philosophical leanings, the answer is simple – it's one of the best sci-fi movies ever made staring Keanu Reeves and Laurence Fishburne. Hopefully it'll give Hollywood the kung-fu kick in the happy sacks it needs to realise that the world doesn't need any more films like Event Horizon.

SELECTED EXTRAS:
Follow the white rabbit
What is Bullet Time documentary
Do you know kung fu? challenge

90

REVIEWS

THE ESSENTIAL **PSM2** VERDICT ON EVERY NEW RELEASE

MEN IN BLACK (LIMITED SPECIAL EDITION)

Certificate ..... PG
Price £24.99
Sound ..... Dolby Digital
Picture ..... Anamorphic widescreen 1.85:1

Will Smith, Tommy Lee Jones and some aliens who obviously haven't watched Green Card. Great special effects and a plot that requires the intelligence that ten pints of larger instills in people, is all you need to enjoy this no-brainer bubble gum for the eyes.

SELECTED EXTRAS:
Visual commentary
Scene editing workshop
Tunnel scene deconstruction

90

THE MUMMY

Certificate 15
Price £19.99
Sound ..... Dolby Digital
Picture ..... Anamorphic widescreen 2.35:1

Just when you lose hope that they'll ever make an Indiana Jones film again, they do. However, this time Indy is Brendan Fraser, and he isn't called Indy anymore. A polished B-movie, but still a great romp through Egyptian mythology.

SELECTED EXTRAS:
Special effects feature
Director's commentary
Deleted scenes

78

MYSTERY MEN

Certificate ..... PG
Price £19.99
Sound ..... Dolby Digital
Picture ..... Anamorphic widescreen 1.85:1

William Macy back again, this time as The Shoveler, a failed superhero struggling to keep his merry bunch of crime fighters together in the face of adversity (or Geoffrey Rush as Casanova Frankenstein). Brilliant, knockabout farce with enough major talent to pull it off.

SELECTED EXTRAS:
Commentary
Deleted scenes
Origins of the Mystery Men

72

ON HER MAJESTY'S SECRET SERVICE

Certificate ..... PG
Price £19.99
Sound ..... Stereo
Picture ..... Anamorphic widescreen 2.35:1

More Bond, this time in the guise of Australian George Lazenby. He only did it once, but did it very well indeed, producing a film that, for once, has some of the depth of Fleming's books.

SELECTED EXTRAS:
Commentary
Inside Q's Lab

79

OUT OF SIGHT

Certificate 15
Price £19.99
Sound ..... Dolby Digital
Picture ..... Anamorphic widescreen 1.85:1

Proof, if needed, that George Clooney could do more after ER than just dress up as a sculpted rubber-addicted bat. This sees him pull off some great capers, and pull Jennifer Lopez. Think Quentin Tarantino, but with more depth and you get the idea.

SELECTED EXTRAS:
Commentary
Deleted scenes
Making of documentary

87

PINK FLOYD – THE WALL

Certificate 15
Price £19.99
Sound ..... Dolby Digital
Picture ..... Anamorphic widescreen 1.85:1

Not only a disc for people who know a bong isn't just something you hear on the ITV news. Pink Floyd may not be to everyone's taste, and this film is Roger Waters at his most pretentious, but it's one hell of a good sounding and well specified DVD.

SELECTED EXTRAS:
Making of documentary
Bonus tracks
System set-up guide

68

RONIN

Certificate 15
Price £19.99
Sound ..... Dolby Digital
Picture ..... Widescreen 2.35:1

A muddled plot brings together several of the world's best killers, has them confuse the hell out the audience, but then redeems it with a car chase through Paris worthy of The Italian Job.

SELECTED EXTRAS:
Alternate ending
Filming in the fast lane documentary

67

THE SEARCHERS

Certificate ..... U
Price £12.99
Sound ..... Stereo
Picture ..... Anamorphic widescreen 1.85:1

John Ford was the director that brought out one of John Wayne's finest performances as the existential bounty hunter, that most agree has never been bettered. A classic wetern now preserved for all time on DVD.

SELECTED EXTRAS:
Featurettes
Interview with Jeffrey Hunter

89

THE SIXTH SENSE

Certificate 15
Price £19.99
Sound ..... Dolby Digital
Picture ..... Anamorphic widescreen 1.85:1

You too can see dead people when you get your hands on this superb thriller. It'll keep you guessing up until the end, and when the much talked about twist comes up, you can congratulate yourself on the fact that you spotted it 20 minutes in.

SELECTED EXTRAS:
Rules and clues
Storyboard comparison
Deleted scenes

88

SLEEPY HOLLOW

Certificate 15
Price £19.99
Sound ..... Dolby Digital
Picture ..... Anamorphic widescreen 1.85:1

Tim Burton, don't you just love him? Here he retells the classic American horror story about the townsfolk succumbing to the razor sharp blade of the decapitated one. Kudos to the man who cast Christopher Walken as the headless horseman.

SELECTED EXTRAS:
Director's commentary
Documentary

73

SHAKESPEARE IN LOVE

Certificate 15
Price £19.99
Sound ..... Dolby Digital
Picture ..... Widescreen 1.85:1

It's all luvvy, luvvy, darling in Shakespeare world, and not a Branagh in sight. Shakespeare (Joseph Fiennes) has writer's block, but Paltrow gives his quill a good blow and the problem's solved, but will everyone like his new play?

SELECTED EXTRAS:
Making of documentary
Cast and crew commentary
Director's commentary

75

SUMMER OF SAM

Certificate 18
Price £19.99
Sound ..... Dolby Digital
Picture ..... Anamorphic widescreen 1.78:1

Spike Lee makes a good film shocker. Yes, he's a worthy producer of issue-provoking material, but with this movie he surpassed himself. It's set around the time Son of Sam was on a killing spree in New York, but Lee chooses to focus on the effect it has on the population.

SELECTED EXTRAS:
Commentary
Behind the scenes
Production notes

79

TARZAN (COLLECTOR'S EDITION)

Certificate ..... U
Price £24.99
Sound ..... Dolby Digital
Picture ..... Anamorphic widescreen 1.66:1

Disney take Edgar Rice Burrough's tale of abandonment and survival, and remain surprisingly faithful to the original story's dark edge. Nigel Hawthorne and Brian Blessed weigh in with some great characterisations, but it's all you can do to block out the Phil Collins soundtrack.

SELECTED EXTRAS:
History and development
Animation Process
Read along

70

THE TALENTED MR RIPLEY

Certificate 15
Price £19.99
Sound ..... Dolby Digital
Picture ..... Anamorphic widescreen 1.85:1

Another masterpiece from the talented British director and ex-Grange Hill scribe Anthony Minghella. The Ripley in question is Matt Damon, someone not happy with his life but willing to take over the lives of others if it suits him.

SELECTED EXTRAS:
Inside The Talented Mr Ripley
Making of the soundtrack
Film commentary

89

THE THING

Certificate 18
Price £19.99
Sound ..... Dolby Digital
Picture ..... Anamorphic widescreen 1.85:1

John Carpenter's masterful update of the '50s original finds Kurt Russel trapped in a remote ice base. All hell soon breaks loose after the research team discover a buried UFO which contains a particularly gruesome alien. Not only does the critter possess its host, it then dramatically mutates them thanks to the prowess of effects wizard Rob Bottin. Broke the horror mould back in 1982 and is still a thrill packed ride today.

SELECTED EXTRAS:
Documentary on the making of *The Thing*
Commentary from Russel and Carpenter
Outtakes

86

THREE KINGS

Certificate 15
Price £19.99
Sound ..... Dolby Digital
Picture ..... Anamorphic widescreen 2.35:1

Not the Christmas tale, that's for sure. George Clooney, Mark Wharlberg and Ice Cube get to nick Saddam's gold during the Gulf War and save pretty much everyone in the process. Young, hip and brilliant.

SELECTED EXTRAS:
Documentary
Video journal
An intimate look inside the acting process... with Ice Cube

79

THIS IS SPINAL TAP

Certificate 15
Price £19.99
Sound ..... Dolby Digital
Picture ..... Anamorphic widescreen 1.85:1

Dinosaurs of rock unite on DVD. The Tap are back, the band that influenced everyone from The Beatles to Westlife prove once again (it gets released every few years on some format or other), why this is the funniest film ever made.

SELECTED EXTRAS:
Commentary (by Spinal Tap)
Song videos
Deleted scenes

90

VERTIGO

Certificate ..... PG
Price £19.99
Sound ..... Dolby Digital
Picture ..... Anamorphic widescreen 1.85:1

James Stewart and Kim Novak are the hapless puppets at the will of Alfred Hitchcock. He dangles them over bridges, from tall building and anywhere else he can combine the dramatic feeling of vertigo and his own unsurpassed talents for thrills.

SELECTED EXTRAS:
Making of documentary
Commentary by restorers

82

UNDERWORLD EVERYTHING EVERYTHING

Certificate ..... E
Price £19.99
Sound ..... Dolby Digital
Picture ..... Anamorphic widescreen 1.85:1

Groundbreaking, soundtrack-selling dance outfit. Underworld, rock the floor with their excellent European tour, comprised of loads of great tunes from the Dubnobasswithmyheadman, Second Toughest In The Infants and Beaucoup Fish albums. Lovely visuals, too.

SELECTED EXTRAS:
Live Tomato Art jam
Bonus tracks

88

THE WORLD IS NOT ENOUGH

Certificate 12
Price £19.99
Sound ..... Dolby Digital
Picture ..... Anamorphic widescreen 2.35:1

Action all the way as 007 gets to do what he does best – destroy public property, endanger human life as we know it and make corny gags – "I thought Christmas only came one a year." Looks great on DVD, as do all the Bond movies released so far.

SELECTED EXTRAS:
Director commentary
Tribute to Desmond Llewelyn

60

Can't wait?
DAILY
RADAR
.CO.UK
Computer and video games, DVD and movie news, as it happens.

Bandi Aid: Looks alone can't save the ginger marsupial this time around.

OUT UK NOW

CRASH BASH

Write down every expletive you can think of and Blu Tack it next to the TV, because, boy, you're going to need 'em....

REVIEWER: Andy Dyer

DEVELOPER ..... Eurocom
PUBLISHER ..... SCEE
PLAYERS 1-4
PRICE ..... £24.99-£29.99
ESSENTIALS ..... DualShock, Memory Card, MultiTap

A more appropriate title might be Crash & Burn, because that's exactly what the reputation of Sony's *Bandicoot* might do after this shocker. Don't get us wrong. On the surface *Crash Bash* adds up to a whole heap of fun. But it's only when you start to play that your stomach sinks and you realise that something is terribly, terribly wrong.

Like the previous *Crash* platformers before it, *Crash Bash* is graphically accomplished. The familiar characters are well-animated, there's plenty of visual humour and the environments are colourful and interesting. There're a few weak spots – on the *Pong*-style rounds for instance, the balls have no shadows. But mostly it's a looker.

As with traditional platformers you start in a warp room from which you can play a number of levels. Complete them to collect trophies, gems and crystals and open up new warp rooms and levels. So far so good.

Even the events themselves seem fine. Those *Pong*-style levels see four characters sliding around in front of goals trying to stop silver balls from getting past them. Racing games consist of simple oval tracks to hurtle around, while other challenges include *Mr Do*-style floor painting contests and crate-throwing blast-em-up exercises.

But, there are two fundamental problems. There're only a handful of event types to take part in, making it repetitive. Most serious though, is the way in which the game increases in difficulty – instead of your opponents becoming more skillful on higher levels, the game merely makes things tougher for you, but not for them. So, for example, on a race level, you have to complete ten laps while your opponents only have to complete eight – which is a lazy way to construct a difficulty curve. It's this tiresomely uneven playing field that proves to be the game's undoing. Even in multi-player mode the pernickety gameplay fails to satisfy.

"THERE'RE ONLY A HANDFUL OF EVENT TYPES TO TAKE PART IN"

You can play the game as a co-operative couple though, and, you'll be pleased to hear, it's actually quite fun. But the fun comes more from a disbelieving sense of "Thank God we're in this hell together", rather than any shared feelings of an enjoyable job well done. Tragic really. Let's just hope this is a temporary blip in the otherwise blemish-free *Crash* story. PSM2

INSIGHT

Crash Bandicoot was originally conceived in August 1994, a full year before it emerged as a PlayStation game. It was intended to be a side-scrolling platformer with mad professor/dinosaur hybrids called 'Saurus and Dinestein'. Thank sweet baby Jesus it wasn't.

ANTIPODEAN'S CHOICE

1 **BISHI BASHI SPECIAL**
Stupid, insane Japanese button-bashing with crap looks, but it's genius nevertheless.

2 **CRASH TEAM RACING**
It's a multi-player game, and it's got Crash in it. They should have retired the 'coot after this.

3 **CRASH BASH**
Not so much a disaster, as a shamelessly, ill-conceived install-ment in the series.

PSM2 VERDICT

GAMEPLAY
+ At times challenging and fun.
- For the most part, unfair and excruciating.

GRAPHICS
+ Captures the magic and fun of the previous *Crash* games.
- Balls with no shadows? Could do better.

SOUND
+ Absolutely fine. Funny character voices, nice effects.
- You won't hear it over your own swearing

LIFESPAN
+ Pretty tough. The last warp room is a bitch.
- Not enough games, and certainly not enough good ones.

OVERALL
If nice looks and quirky game ideas were the only factors involved, this would be a classic. Sadly, it's far from it.

MANGY **53**

OUT UK NOW

DRIVER 2

We'd like to say that criminal activity and reckless driving are bad news. The evidence here suggests otherwise...

REVIEWER: Andy Dyer

DEVELOPER Reflections
PUBLISHER Infogrames/GT Interactive
PLAYERS 1-2
PRICE £29.99
ESSENTIALS DualShock, Memory Card, Sundry steering wheels

It doesn't get any cooler than *Driver 2*. The original game took us right back to the '70s and reminded us what a great place it was. Full of funky music, sharp characters resplendent in generous trouser legs and open-necked shirts, and a certain criminal chic. At least, that's how we'd like to remember it.

In reality the '70s were a tacky affair, so it's just as well we have a second opportunity to immerse ourselves in *Driver's* gloriously hip '70s universe. If the original game had flaws, few of us were prepared to moan about them in the light of *Driver's* enormous playability. Nevertheless, wrinkles have been ironed out and improvements have been made, making this an almost perfect sequel.

Tanner and Tobias Jones are still the heroes (and indeed villains) of the day, but this time there's a fuller role for main guy Tanner. Great though the first game was, he was car-bound for the entire game. Not this time. Now our man can wander around and steal other people's wheels, including buses, trucks and fire engines, the latter being the ultimate girl magnet (ladies love firemen, they tell us). This ability to wander around gives Tanner a chance to show off his Diesel and Oswald Boetang-sponsored threads. Told you this game was cool.

More substantial improvements come in the form of classier graphics – now there are smooth corners in the roads, as wells as flyovers, and the cut-scenes are much improved, increasing the game's movie-like appeal.

IMPACT WITH THE DEVIL: Now those panel-ruining collisions are sharper, with added crunch effects.

The scale of everything is greater too. As well as cruising and abusing the streets of Chicago and Las Vegas, you're headed for Rio and Havana.

Bigger, Better and More are all words to describe this refreshingly complete follow-up. **PSM2**

INSIGHT

Driver 2 takes place in Chicago, Illinois and Las Vegas, Nevada. According to American crime statistics, Nevada has a car theft rate of 51% above the national average, while Illinois runs at only 92% of the national average. Our advice to Tanner is to concentrate on Chicago where the rozzers will be be less accustomed to car crime and consequently won't know what the *shit's* going on.

"THE CUT-SCENES ARE MUCH IMPROVED, INCREASING THE GAME'S MOVIE-LIKE APPEAL"

JOYRIDER'S CHOICE

1 **DRIVER 2**
A genuinely rewarding, and impressive, sequel

2 **DRIVER**
Tanner's first outing. And what a joyful ride it was too.

3 **TWISTED METAL 2**
Only just above average now, but the automotive carnage still gives you a buzz.

4 **GTA**
Flawed and crude. But the subversive criminal premise is entertaining.

PSM2 VERDICT

GAMEPLAY
+ Naughty and exceptionally nice. Super-cool, dangerous, brilliant.
- There's little to criticise here

GRAPHICS
+ Again, the look is as cool as the idea.
- Grittiness sometimes strays into scrappiness.

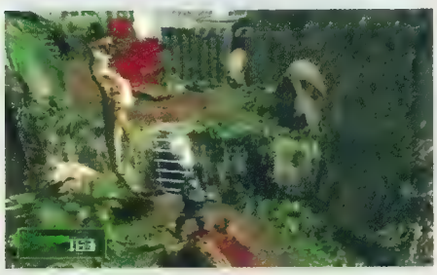
SOUND
+ The sounds you'd expect from any decent '70s movie.
- There's, um, no clicking indicator effects?

LIFESPAN
+ It's a massive game. And tough with it.
- Those excessive loading times make it even longer.

OVERALL
***Driver* delivered a great idea, gritty visuals and thrilling gameplay. *Driver 2* does it better. *Midnight Club* should take note.**

90

SUPER-FLY



DINO CRISIS 2

OUT UK NOW

DEVELOPER Capcom
PUBLISHER Capcom/Virgin
PLAYERS 1
PRICE £29.99

At the end of a pint, the lager connoisseur shouts "Same again, barman!" to be rewarded with another identical beer... equally cool, equally refreshing, and reassuringly familiar. So it was at the end of *Dino Crisis*. "Fill her up again, Capcom!" we shouted. They responded. Only this time, they've thrown in a Red Bull and vodka chaser on the house. Lovely job.

A great story, fully rounded characters, tension... it's all still there. But this time there're more rampant dinosaurs, more frantic action, secondary weapons like machetes and electric knifes, and a points system that enables you to upgrade your weapons as you progress. A massive improvement on an above average game from Capcom. It'd appear we're getting another raging thirst on already. **PSM2** **90**

THE WORLD IS NOT ENOUGH

OUT UK NOW

DEVELOPER Black Ops
PUBLISHER Electronic Arts
PLAYERS 1
PRICE £29.99

The full-on, visceral thrills of the *Doom/Quake/Unreal* family tree represent the purest form of first-person action. But the introduction of mission-based, stealthy variations on the theme has delivered some memorable experiences. *GoldenEye* on the N64 and *Medal of Honor* on PlayStation are brilliant examples of this and *The World is Not Enough* is equally as good.

Improving on *Tomorrow Never Dies*, *TWINE* follows the plot of the film closely, throws in all the odd gadgets and lethal weapons you could wish for, adds amusing bonus games – like trying to win £100,000 at the Blackjack tables – and underpins all this Bond-related mucking about with some solid, thought-provoking gameplay. **PSM2** **85**

ALSO RELEASED

CHICKEN RUN

Publisher Eidos **Developer** Blitz Games
Price £29.99

The film was no sow's ear, and at the very least has given us the basis for an absolutely cracking PlayStation title for younger gamers. Think *Metal Gear Solid* meets The Great Escape... with chickens. Find objects, create makeshift tools, cut fences, avoid dogs, lay eggs – it follows the film's plot closely, and comes packed with lots of mini-games which, for once, link together into a cohesive whole. Fabulous. **PSM2** **83**

BUGS & TAZ TIME BUSTERS

Publisher Infogrames **Developer** Infogrames
Price £29.99

It was the humour of Bugs, plus some sufficiently fun platforming action, that lifted *Bugs Bunny: Lost In Time* above mediocrity. Sadly, even with the introduction of Taz this is a lazy sequel. Technically poor, it's not something that even our favourite 'toons can dish up a second time and get away with it. **PSM2** **49**

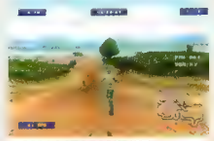
KNOCKOUT KINGS 2001

Publisher Electronic Arts (EA Sports) **Developer** Black Ops
Price £29.99

It could be that the memory plays tricks, or that we've taken one too many uppercuts since the first *Knockout Kings* came out, but this sequel actually seems worse than the original. OK, we only ever expect a handful of tweaks from an Electronic Arts sporting sequel, and sure enough the added moves and combos, lady fighters and Career mode here represent just that. But the fighting is abysmal. **PSM2** **47**

COMING SOON

TOMB RAIDER CHRONICLES
Snapshots of the late Lara Croft's past exploits.



CHAMPIONSHIP MOTOCROSS 2001
Do dirt bike games really work? Find out next issue.

THE GRINCH
He allegedly stole Christmas. Or did he?

PLAYSTATION 2 MAGAZINE
PSM2

PRO TIPS

TRAINING YOU IN THE DARK ARTS OF PLAYSTATION 2

JOEL

THIS MONTH, WE'VE BEEN MOSTLY SLAVING AWAY

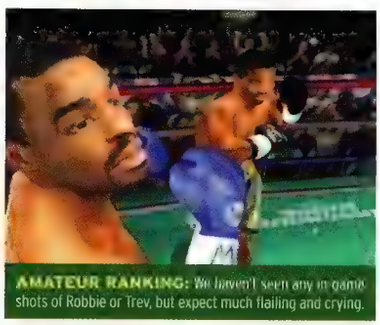
on the guide given away with this magazine – playing games until our fingers bleed, then pestering developers and tournament champions alike to present you with the most comprehensive guide to PS2 mastery anywhere on this planet.

We all breathed a sigh of satisfaction when it was over – except for Dan, who was still strapped to a chair with his eyes wired open, being given a gentle poke with a stick every time he looked like nodding off. The reason? Partly our own amusement, but mostly so we'd be able to present our savagely comprehensive guide to *SSX*. It's the game you should be buying along with your PS2, and it's so jammed with secrets that we were still reeling in shock from discovering a new death-defying shortcut two weeks after we'd completed every mountain at the highest level. Read, learn, then then try to go one better by participating in our *SSX* challenge, starting the moment you glance over the page.

And don't feel too sorry for Dan – he loved every minute of it.

HIDDEN CELEBS

SECRETS & LIES



AMATEUR RANKING: We haven't seen any in-game shots of Robbie or Trev, but expect much flailing and crying.

A trend has emerged in the cut-throat world of celebrity – turning up in videogames. At least you can hit 'em.

Celebrities! Trying to revive interest in your flagging career? Just licence yourself out to appear in a computer game. With no more hassle than having twenty kilos of motion-capture kit duct-taped to your chest, you'll become an instantly recognisable face again, and kids everywhere will be able to punch and shoot you. Just look at these fellows:

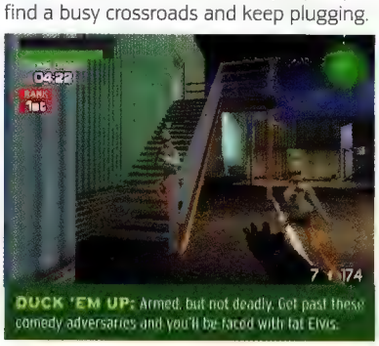
SHAQ AND JACKO

It's barely a secret these days, but Shaquille O'Neill and Michael Jackson both make an appearance in *R2R: Round 2*. To get them, you'll need to complete the game twice for Jacko and five times for Shaq – just stick it on easy, leave the training on auto and sail through.

RUMBLE PACK: It seems a bit unfair to slap the androgynous Jacko around, but Shaq's hard as nails.

ELVIS

Well, not actually Elvis, but an entire legion of his sequin-jumpsuited, banana-sandwich-frying impersonators. To fight the pelvic-thrusting freaks, you'll have to complete the obscenely hard Challenge levels in *TimeSplitters*. For full details, see the tips book, but in general, when you're killing ridiculous numbers of people, just find a busy crossroads and keep plugging.



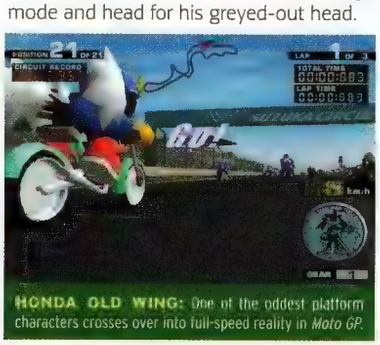
DUCK 'EM UP: Armed, but not deadly. Get past these comedy adversaries and you'll be faced with fat Elvis.

TREVOR NELSON

The British R'n'B DJ, who hasn't had a fight since he was 13, will be appearing as a secret fighter in *Knockout Kings 2001*. Following the recent announcement that Robbie Williams will also be appearing, we're looking forward to a clash of the musos.

KLONOA

Not strictly a celebrity, then, but we were so entertained by his appearance in *Moto GP* that we've included him anyway. In a game so realistic you'll wince as knees scrape tarmac, it seems odd that they'd include a cutesy character who looks a bit like Pepe Le Peu. Still, if you actually *want* to race around as a small furry animal in a tri-cornered hat, just turn to Challenge mode and head for his greyed-out head.



HONDA OLD WING: One of the oddest platform characters crosses over into full-speed reality in *Moto GP*.

CHALLENGE SPECIAL

Hurtling off a cliff, and trying to right yourself seconds before a kneecap-shattering impact. What fun lies ahead.

SSX mastery isn't easy. You'll crash, you'll curse, you'll secretly know that it was your own stupid fault. But you'll keep trying, because *SSX* is frighteningly addictive. So, here's our list of top times and scores to beat. The race times are from Freeride, so you don't have to worry about rival boarders, but to even come close, you'll have to have a fully stoked-up character. Don't complain that we've got a head start, because just over the page is a vast compilation of our favourite shortcuts.

Start practising now, then, because next month, the challenge begins in earnest...

PSM2 TOP TIP! When you're dishing up each character's trick list, tick off the ones you've done in our over-achievers' tips book.

COURSE	TOP TIME	TOP SCORE
SNOWDREAM	1:58:02	115900
ELYSIUM ALPS	4:19:10	150670
MERQUAY CITY	2:59:49	113500
MESABLANCA	3:15:54	99330
TOKYO MEGAPLEX	3:19:23	157900
ALOHA ICE JAM	1:58:11	-
PIPEDREAM	-	165740

>YOUR QUESTIONS... ANSWERED

Q&A Q&A

Only room for one question this month, so we've picked one on a subject dear to our hearts – fighting. Next month, we'll be dealing with all your launch-game-related queries, so get those letters in. But just remember – we can only help you with your PS2, not life.

Q: I'VE GOT IMPORT VERSIONS OF BOTH DOA2 AND TEKKEN TAG, BUT I CAN'T SEEM TO DO ANY TEAM-UP MOVES IN THE LATTER, EVEN THOUGH YOU SAID THEY'RE IN THERE. WERE YOU LYING? ALSO, I'VE HEARD EACH CHARACTER HAS A MOVE THAT KNOCKS OUT THEIR OPPONENT IN ONE HIT. IS THIS TRUE?

FROM: Ben Richards, via e-mail

A: No, but *Tekken's* tag combos are a bit trickier than the ones you'll find in *DOA2*. Most of them are listed in this month's tips book, but if you're looking for others, just try picking a team that includes two related players (Ling and Panda, for instance, or Jun and Jin), and experiment with pressing tag immediately after one of their complicated throw moves. As for one-hit KOs, only two characters have these – Jack's fully-charged Megaton Punch is one, and Kuma's Bear Fart is the other.

WILD WILD RACING

No good at dirt-racing? Cold-snack-based career ambitions shattered by the lure of a high-paying office job? Just trying to get back to your home planet, but keep accidentally incinerating cows and being shot at by rednecks? Well, whether you're an aspiring stuntman, closet ice-cream vendor or alien grey, *Wild Wild Racing's* got just the vehicle for you, and you don't even need to complete the game. Try the following to get the Wild Wolf, Mr Whippy van or Cow Catcher:

In the options menu hold down L2 and press: ↑, ○, ↓, ○, ←, →, ←, →, ○. This opens up a secret menu on the options screen, allowing you to open up all nine stunt tracks.

Enter Player One's name as NORTHEND. This will open up a 'top secret' menu within the first secret menu.

THICK 'N' CREAMY: The Mr Whippy van's actually faster and handles better than most of the early cars.

WEB SITES

"Try living in the real world!" wailed square-headed Smiths'-helmer, Morrissey. Well, that's what we've been doing this month, and frankly, we don't like it very much – all of our favourite gaming activities, when practiced in real life, offer little more than injury and incarceration mixed in with the occasional surge of testosterone. See for yourself.

JF'S SNOWBOARDING

We know we've gone a bit snowboarding mental this month, but we got all excited again when we found this site, hosted by the enigmatic JF. It's got mini-video clips of rapidly spinning men in hats, as well as a vast picture gallery and links to a wealth of desktop snowboarding games. Although, of course, you really only need the one, as you've probably realised by now. Remember kids, pay attention to JF and don't, for heaven's sake, try tricks like the Pop Tart, J-Tear and Crippler (an inverted aerial where the rider performs a 180° flip, apparently), without a safety net, or something.

http://www.geocities.com/Pipeline/Ramp/1472/

CHIMP CAPOEIRA

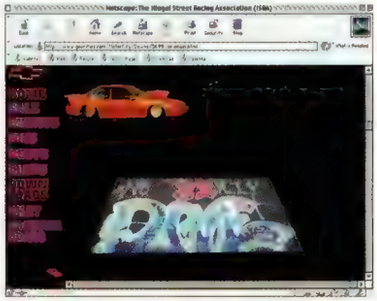
It's the source of much aggravation to *Tekken* players, but the one martial art that everyone secretly wishes they could do. This enormous site includes videos of real-life moves that verge on the suicidal, an explanation of the history of Capoeira, a look at all of its past videogame incarnations, and an interview with Marcelo Pereira, the man behind the motion-capturing of Eddy Gordo. If you're feeling the need for a bit of friend-impressing, neck-endangering exercise, it's also got explanations of some moves, plastered with BIG WARNING SIGNS.

members.aol.com/Bill510/capoeira.html

STREET RACING

Finally, while it's an increasingly popular activity (look at *Midnight Club* and *Top Gear Dare Devil*), we were mildly surprised to find a website for The Illegal Street Racing Association. The ISRA operate in San Francisco bay, and their website includes a Chatroom, event listings (of car shows, not illegal races, you excitable Californian law-enforcement types) and pictures of former champions.

www.geocities.com/MotorCity/Downs/5699/israma in.html



SSX

We took *SSX* into a darkened room and beat it with a frozen joypad until it bled short-cuts. Every course, tactic and trick laid bare.

EXPERT: Daniel Dawkins

- **DEVELOPER** EA Canada
- **PUBLISHER** Electronic Arts
- **GAME TYPE** Snowboard Racer

AIM OF THE GAME

It's a snowboard racing game with a light sprinkling of *Tekken*. Victory by *any* means possible. As you'd expect of such a title, the gameplay is instantly satisfying, but achingly deep. The mighty challenges never seem unachievable because you'll improve with every single go. There's so many secrets to discover that you won't rest until you've unlocked *everything* the game has to offer. So, you'll be wanting to know where to start...

WORLD CIRCUIT

Feeling the need for speed? Then get stuck into the races. Starting on the Snowdream course you've got to finish third or better in two qualifying rounds to reach the final. If you hit the top three again, you'll earn a medal and, gerrin' m'son, a new course. Good performances gain experience points to improve your rider's abilities. You'll also win new boards to suit the different types of courses – from snub trick boards to lengthy slalom monsters. But get Gold on *every* track and your character still won't have reached the title of Master. What could be left?

SHOW-OFF

Trickier than David Blaine, less forgiving than Anne Widdicombe – this is where *SSX* experts really test their mettle. Re-visit the courses to reach hi-score targets against wicked time limits. It's an immensely satisfying premise. To score big, you *have* to collect the snowflakes dotted about the levels. They multiply your trick score according to the difficulty of reaching them. Yellow snowflakes appear near small jumps and will double your score. Orange flakes involve tougher jumps but triple your scores. As for red snowflakes, you'll spot them 100 feet above you and curse the sick puppy that put them there. They look unreachable. They're not. Let PSM2 show you how...

THE ESSENTIAL SELECTION

Don't ride, but *own* the mountain. Success relies on a seamless transition between thought and deed.

1 PRE-WIND

The longer you hold jump, the further you travel. The longer you press the Analogue stick, the faster you rotate. Line up early for big jumps, and don't be afraid to stop boosting or leaning into the slope while you get things right. Release the pre-wind sooner than you think, or you'll miss the vertical boost off the curve of the ramp. It'll be too late to release the pre-wind in mid air. Don't forget that a poorly aligned pre-wind can be cancelled by pressing L3.

REMEMBER: *Pre-wind early, release early.*

2 GET BACK ON TRACK

Press SELECT to return to the track when you're stuck, lost off-piste or jammed behind a rock. It costs a few notches of your adrenaline bar, but the time penalty is negligible, so don't be shy. It's especially useful when you fall down a ravine. If you were more than halfway over the gap before you fell, SELECT will magically leap you to the other side.

REMEMBER: *Get stuck: press* SELECT.

3 SPEED UP

As a general rule, you should always be pushing forwards to max out your speed from the slope. It results in slightly limited turning control so beware on ice, concrete and super-tight bends, where you need all the edge you can get. Soft powder and impact landings are the other exceptions.

REMEMBER: *Max speed: push forwards.*

4 PUSHING JUMPS

Your pre-wind will largely determine your flight through the air, but you can keep pressing in the required flip direction to really push your tricks to the limit. It can be the difference between a single or double flip. Conversely, if you look like landing on your head, use the Analogue to straighten things out, then release your grip and float home. Always stop rotating the pad when you're happy with your trick.

REMEMBER: *Keep spinning, keep pushing.*

5 LANDING JUMPS

It's often preferable to lean back for *really* big landings. The tail of the board is very flexible and will absorb unbelievable impacts. This is especially true for ice and powder hits. Leaning forward will just send you arse over elbow. Don't forget you have a limited ability to rectify your body shape in the air after a pre-wind. Keep moving the Analogue stick to create a flat-bellied and stable impact.

REMEMBER: *Big drop, stable board.*

6 GRABS

The four shoulder buttons access different grabs and ○ is used to tweak them out further. Use in combination to score big. Press R1, R2, L1, L2 and then ○ to unleash a sequence of grabs resulting in a tweaked Experimental Air. Don't rush it – push one button, wait for the grab to appear, press the next and wait for the other, and so forth. The full list of button combinations are in your trick book. Don't be afraid to try experimental combinations.

REMEMBER: *More grabs, more buttons*

7 GRINDS AND SLIDES

Grinds require careful alignment with the rail, so slow down and shape up carefully. You can usually ride straight up them without jumping. It's often advisable to use adrenaline boosts as they increase your stability. Balance can be corrected with subtle flicks of the Analogue pad. A neat trick is to perform a 90° jump onto a board slide, you've got a bigger surface to land on and less chance of falling. Hold pre-wind whilst on a rail to prepare a leap between broken sections.

REMEMBER: *Slow approach, quick grind.*

8 PUNCHES

Flick the right Analogue in the required direction to flick out an arm. Yes, it's always satisfying to clonk an elbow into Jurgen's nose, but, as a general rule, only use punches if someone stumbles into a prime position. You can whack people in mid-air too.

REMEMBER: *Punch fast, ride past..*

9 BOARD SELECTION

Quite simply, the more you win, the better your boards get. Just keep picking the latest model for each new level. Keep an eye out for the doofus slalom boards – they're only suitable for people who want to race straight and fast, and are generally hopeless for spin tricks. It should go without saying that mini-trick boards are the only choice for the Show-off levels.

REMEMBER: *Your style, your choice.*

10 BOOST ICONS

It's worth remembering the position of speed boost icons as they really give you a shove. Always keep your eye out for trick icons near huge jumps so you can maximise your points and boost your adrenaline bar. Once again, don't get obsessed about hitting them – a wild veer towards an icon could cause a self-defeating wipeout.

REMEMBER: *Eyes wide, faster ride.*

THE ADRENALINE BAR EXPLAINED

That big coiled bar on the right of the screen is where your tricks are converted to speed boosts. To build it up with limited fuss always hit big jumps with big tricks. Push the Analogue diagonally for Misty-style flips and get in a grab or two. Don't fuss about on the flat doing silly 360° twists for one measly boost point – you'll only end up scuffing one and falling. Grinds are a great way to build the bar on the move. If you've got boost stored, use it. There are lots of easy jumps to top it up. Winning a qualifying race guarantees a full boost for the next round.

COURSE ONE

SNOWDREAM

SNOWDREAM JAPAN
36.76° North
136.80° East
vert. drop 488m
length 1500
easy

A beginner's course with juicy bump jumps and plentiful rails. Good off-piste opportunities for the attentive. This'll be an easy Gold medal for you.

PSM2 RECORDS
FASTEST TIME:
01'58.02
HIGH SCORE:
115900

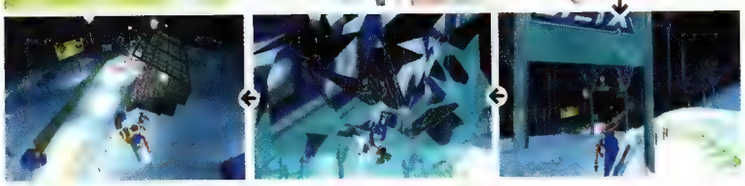
❶ SSX LOGO SMASH

Cut corners by smashing through the glass *SSX* signs – this is the best example. Hint: line up carefully, pre-wind longer and hold down an adrenaline boost as you jump. A peachy leap can really save time.

If you look like missing a jump, try a cheeky front flip. These are very useful as you tend to be pushing forward most of the time anyway.

RISK: 2 **RETURN:** 4 (out of 10)

LINE UP: A confident, straight line with plenty of boost will have you through this *SSX* nice and easily.



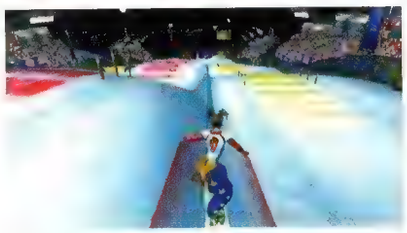
MIND OVER SHATTER: Hit the sign board-first and you'll hardly notice the impact.

PSM2 TOP TIP! STARTS
You can move back and forth on a turbo start or alternatively press forward. The same.

❷ SILVER RAILS

Grind the silver rails near the bump jumps to gain *big* speed. Don't forget to make the jump between the gap in the middle – this'll give a high-scoring combo, and do your adrenaline bar no end of good.

RISK: 3 **RETURN:** 6 (out of ten)

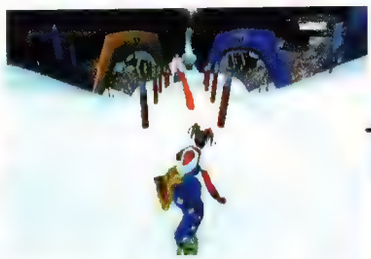


ANGLE GRINDER: It's the quickest route between two points, so use the rails wisely.

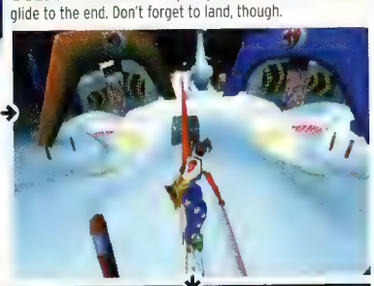
❸ RED RAIL GRIND

After the silver rails, cut in towards the intersection and grind the big red rail. Keep boosting for a huge leap and to stabilise the impact.

RISK: 3 **RETURN:** 6 (out of ten)



STRAIGHT, NO CHASER: Avoid catching the bollards on the left and right - they'll mess your run up.



GOLDEN GRIND: Plenty of speed will mean an effortless glide to the end. Don't forget to land, though.

AIR EXTENSIONS: Linking grinds and air is essential to maintain both your adrenaline bar and momentum.

❹ PISTE SMASH SSX

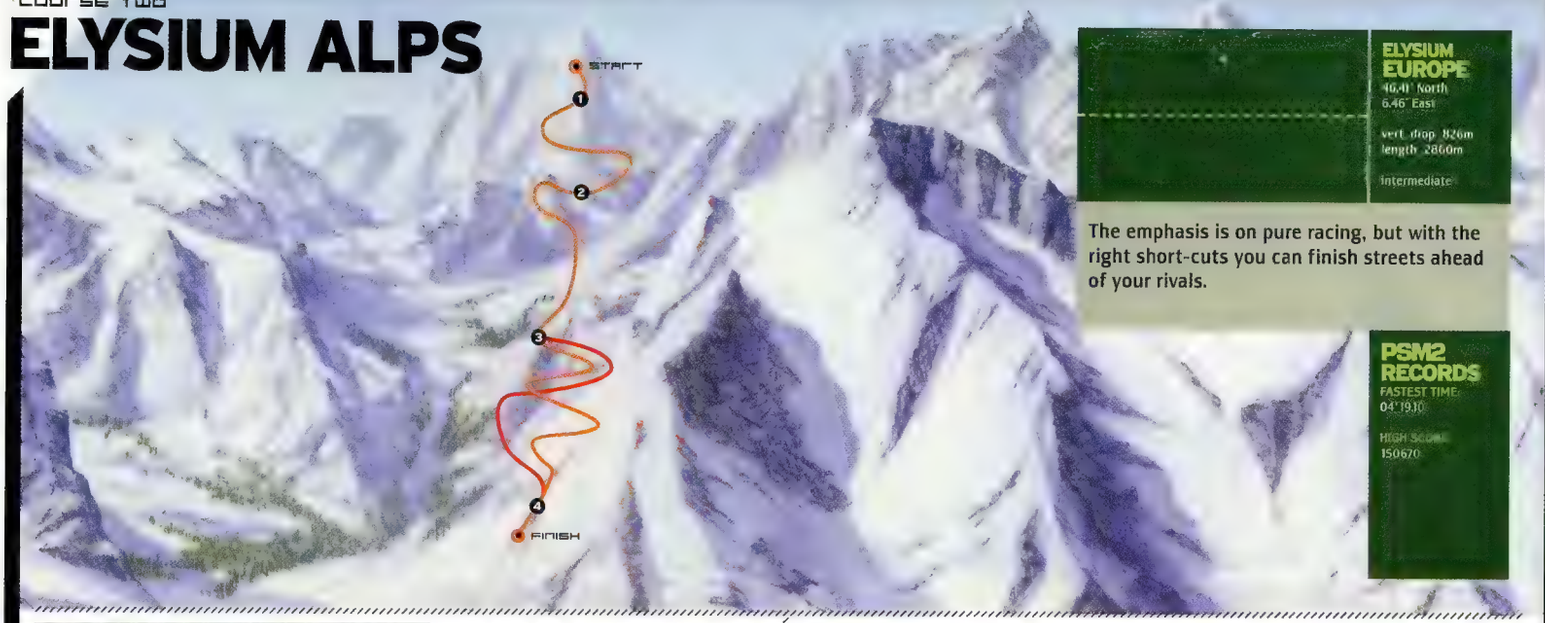
Smash through this *SSX* logo to go crashing off-piste and miss out a huge section of bends. Make sure you cut through to the red rail near the end for a speedy grind.

RISK: 3 **RETURN:** 5 (out of ten)

SLIDING PHWOARS: Rails in deep powder are there to give you a boost, so look out for them.

COURSE TWO

ELYSIUM ALPS



ELYSIUM EUROPE
46.41° North
6.46° East
vert. drop 826m
length 2860m
intermediate

The emphasis is on pure racing, but with the right short-cuts you can finish streets ahead of your rivals.

PSM2 RECORDS
FASTEST TIME:
04'19.10
HIGH SCORE:
150670

❶ SSX CORNER JUMP

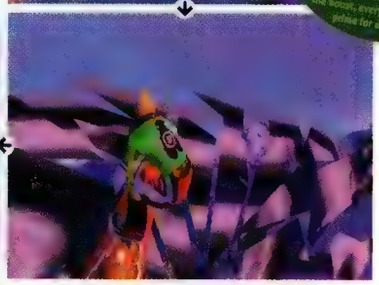
The start of the course is packed with S-shaped bends, allowing you to cut corners. The course walls are steep so you'll need a powerful jump to break free – front flips are perfect as they carry extra forward momentum and require less pre-wind. The best short-cut lies over the double *SSX* barriers shown here. Stabilise, leaning slightly back, for a big impact.

RISK: 2 **RETURN:** 5 (out of ten)

AIM OF THE GAME: Cut into the corners at a shallow angle, and straighten up in line with the signs.

HAMMER IT HOME: Make sure you make the left or right signs, or you'll be bouncing off a metal pole.

INTO THE ABYSS: Yep, quite a drop in the other side. Aim for powder, otherwise it's a hard rock sandwich.



BREAK ON THROUGH: Crash spectacularly through, but remember to steady your board for landing.

PSM2 TOP TIP!
CASUAL JUMPS
Although Trick Mode is essential to master, in Jump Mode you can, using the boost, every banked wall is prime for a flip trick.

❷ SIGN JUMP

Shortly after the *SSX* barriers above, you reach a similar bend with huge billboard signs. Line up early and hit a big front flip – you'll sail past the boards and miss a large winding section of track. In Show-off mode, the same leap can nab you a red snowflake – try grinding the billboards.

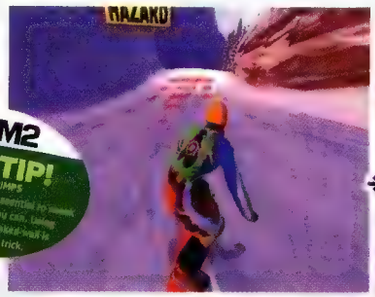
RISK: 3 **RETURN:** 6 (out of ten)

SIGN UP: Get enough air and you can even throw in a cheeky grind off the top of the billboards.

❸ SSX SMASH TO CLIFF JUMPS

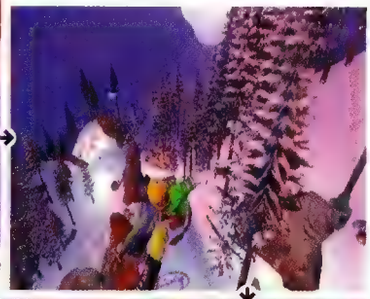
Want to skip a third of the course? Just after the second checkpoint, you'll spot an *SSX* barrier leading off-piste into the powder. Follow it, arching high until you drop blind past the trees. A steady landing is essential to line yourself up for the next jump. Boost, pre-wind hard and release early on the slope of the ramp – you should sail over the huge ravine. Stay frosty because you've got to repeat two equally mammoth jumps. The 'bridge' sections between leaps are short and winding, so expect minimal reaction times. After three cliff jumps, you'll reach a protruding log for you to slide, completing an awesome short-cut. In Show-Off mode, ignore this log and leap for the red snowflake on its right.

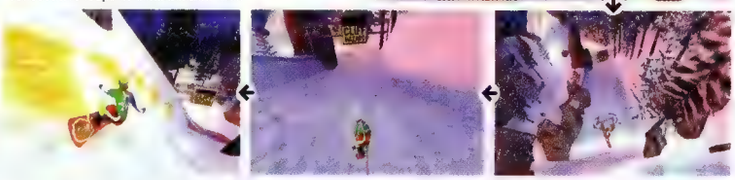
RISK: 6 **RETURN:** 7 (out of ten)



DUKE OF HAZARDS: Steel yourself for some consecutive leaps of considerable size.

INBETWEENIES: Don't forget to get the tricks in while you're off the ground.





DOWN TO EARTH: Make it all the way and you'll be way out in front of the chasing pack.

❹ GLASS WALLS

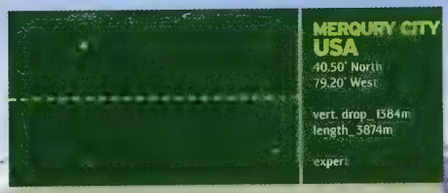
These huge glass barriers can make or break a race. Approach the bank walls at an angle just off vertical and jump early to sail over the bars. Alternatively, use adrenaline boosts to give you an extra push. Land and cut gradually into the next bank for a fresh leap. Keep the motion smooth to traverse in an S-shaped pattern from wall to wall. It's possible to ride along the bank walls and bypass a barrier or two, but you'll eventually be forced down by obstacles. It's sometimes an advantage to follow your rivals through this section – they invariably smash a few panels and create a direct path. In Show-Off mode the orange snowflakes in this area could net you upwards of 30,000 points.

RISK: 5 **RETURN:** 10 (out of ten)

KEEP OFF THE GLASS: Crashing through will cost you time.

COURSE THREE

MERQURY CITY MELTDOWN



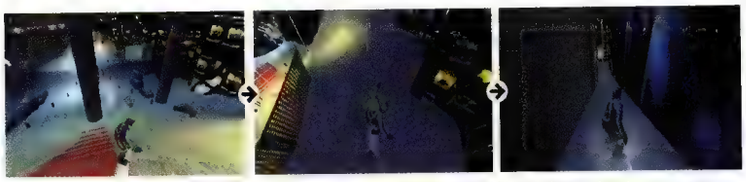
A nefarious midnight track with evil short-cuts. This course rewards experimentation like no other, and is surprisingly easy to win.

PSM2 RECORDS
FASTEST TIME
02'59.49
HIGH SCORE
113500

❶ SSX HOUSE DODGE

Shortly after the double rails, you'll see a distant *SSX* barrier on your right. Smash it, and locate the gap on the left of the buildings. Follow this route until a thin path appears on your right. Slow down and align carefully, because a collision can cause all sorts of trouble. A nice simple short-cut.

RISK: 3 **RETURN:** 4 (out of ten)

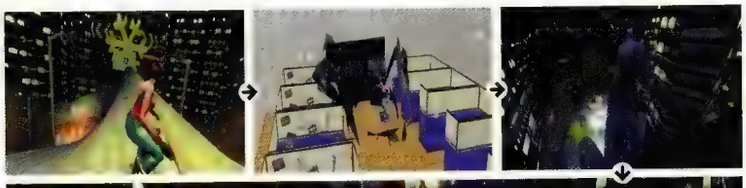


DOWN TOWN: The winding urban setting is worth exploring. There're some hidden paths on almost every corner.

❷ OFFICE RAIL GRIND

A mind-blowing short-cut. When the path diverges left and right, you'll spot an *SSX* barrier in the building ahead. Align carefully, aiming for the thin rail that divides the split paths. Smash into the offices, slow down and go immediate left – or get stuck in a cubicle. Crash out of the office veering right to land on top of a hot air balloon and miss a huge section of the track. You'll feel like The Daddy.

RISK: 5 **RETURN:** 8 (out of ten)



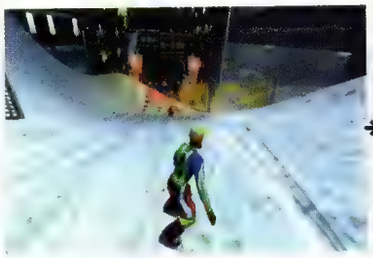
NINE TO FIVE: You'll save a lot of time *and* leave a nice surprise for the cleaners.

PSM2 TOP TIP! WATCH REPLAYS
Use your replays to look for possible short-cuts or improvements to your approach. Try watching a rival's race for some ideas.

❸ MENTAL

This is the big one. Spot the car park entrance between the track barriers and move in. Leap the first gap with jump alone – no boost. The second leap needs a boosted leap to accommodate for the short run up. You won't see the path ahead but sneaky rails link the two buildings. Align yourself a third of a path width from the left or right to make the grind (maybe use a 90° board slide jump to increase your sliding area). You'll smash through another building, emerging at a giant doughnut. Pop through its hole and keep on grinding. This takes some practice but will re-define your notion of impossibility. Be inspired.

RISK: 8 **RETURN:** 10 (out of ten)



GAP AD: Take a right turn just before the visible yellow chevroned fencing...

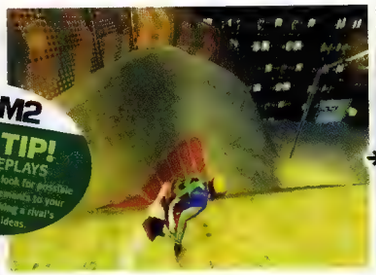
MULTI-STORY: ... and follow the car park down towards the exit, you'll travel over the concrete easily.

STUCK IN THE MIDDLE: Stay central, as the rail won't be visible until you commit yourself to the leap.

❹ CHEEKY RAIL LEAP

After the swooping 180° bends near the end of the course, you'll spot an *SSX* barrier in the building wall to your left. Slow up and approach the barrier bang in the centre. You should drop blind onto a protruding rail. Boost like hell to make an astounding jump over to the distant bowl. Tricky but amazingly speedy.

RISK: 4 **RETURN:** 7 (out of ten)



REDUCE SPEED NOW: First place doesn't always rely on flat-out acceleration...

OVER AND OUT: ... deft control of your speed will get you through even the trickiest short-cut.

course four

MESABLANCA

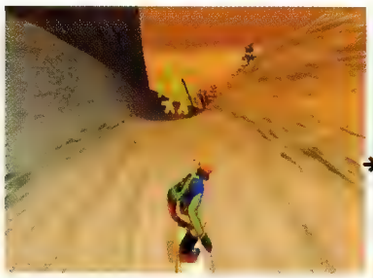
The fastest of all the courses with an incredibly evil jump at the finish. If you don't save some boost, you could find yourself out of the medal placings.

PSM2 RECORDS
FASTEST TIME:
03'15.84
HIGH SCORE:
99330

❶ SECOND BEND JUMP

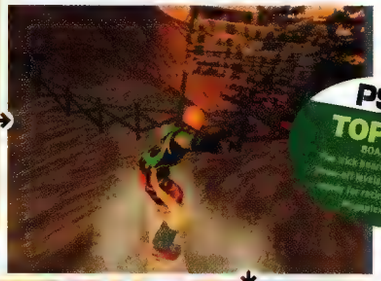
Shortly before the second bend, you'll spot a rickety 'Danger' fence in the background. To reach it, boost and jump well before the apex of the bend. You'll crash the gate and skid around a lightly marked path. Stay on your guard as a protruding log looms near. Align carefully and grind the log. It'll save time or snatch you a yellow snowflake. A big leap off the log will carry you to an alternative jump over the sunset river (and an orange snowflake). Your rivals should be way behind.

RISK: 3 **RETURN:** 7 (out of ten)



CRUMBLIEST AND FLAKIEST: This short-cut has a high scoring return in Show-Off mode.

CRASH TEST DUMMY: The ramshackle fence offers little resistance if your speed is up.



PSM2 TOP TIP!
BOARD JUMP
The trick basics are ace for show-off trials, and surprisingly handy for racing on the Tokyo Megarix as well.

INTO THE TREES: The path is heavily wooded, so keep an eye out for stubborn trunks that'll halt your progress.

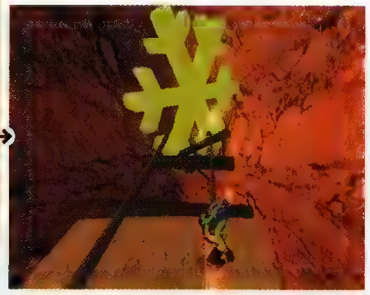
❷ MINE RAIL GRIND

Just after the first checkpoint, you'll reach a rocky intersection with a TV bandstand above. Aim for the right path and jump timidly towards the wooden panels in the floor below. If you miss them, skid hard and turn back towards the panels before you get caught on the next trail. You'll drop into a mine shaft and can grind the rails to pick up huge speed. After a short distance you'll be called upon to leap the broken mine shaft bridge. It's essential *not* to boost, just make a smooth jump or you'll overshoot and clatter the walls. If you make it, boost like mad and steady a huge pre-wind – the tunnel opens out above the main course with an orange snowflake on offer. Don't worry if you miss the bridge leap as you can continue on the slower path below.

RISK: 3 **RETURN:** 8 (out of ten)

SNOW GO: Keep your speed down as the entrance to the mine comes up quickly - you don't want to hang around.

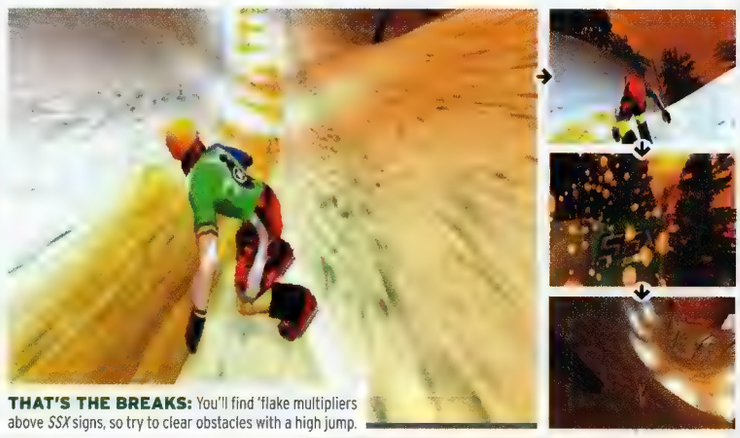
HOLY RAIL: The tracks might be busted, but they'll still give you a long grind with plenty of chance to multiply.



❸ SSX HIGH FLIP

Just in front of the second checkpoint, you'll swoop up a near-vertical banked bend. An *SSX* barrier lies just above the brow of the bank walls. To reach it you'll need to release a boosted front flip. The result is a cheeky orange snowflake and a neat time-saver.

RISK: 3 **RETURN:** 5 (out of ten)

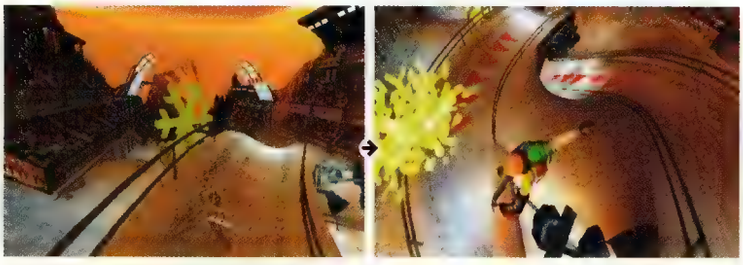


THAT'S THE BREAKS: You'll find 'flake multipliers above *SSX* signs, so try to clear obstacles with a high jump.

❹ CHECKPOINT

Huge winding rails enclose the paths after the second checkpoint, making your way down them can be time-consuming. Don't feel obliged to obey their path. Front flip over the rails and aim for the yellow snowflakes. With careful positioning, your landing will hit a rail below and provide a speed boost.

RISK: 2 **RETURN:** 6 (out of ten)

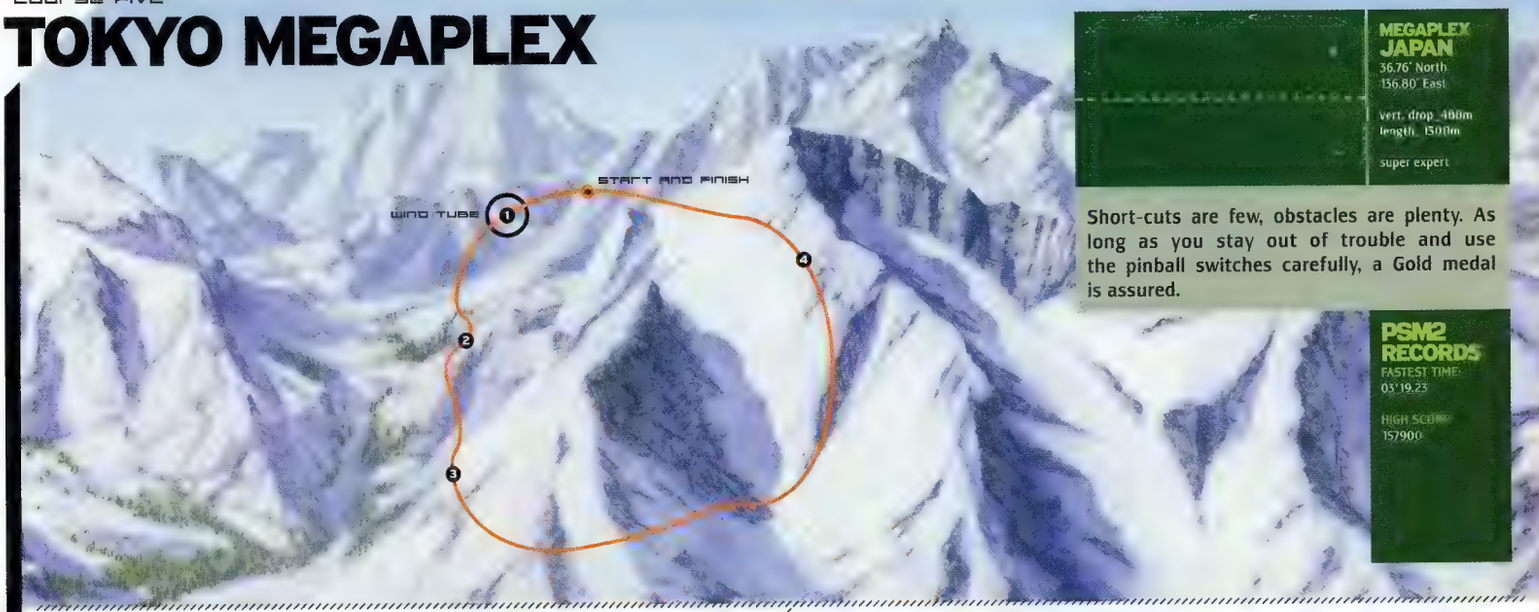


STAND AND DELIVER: This is a great example of how to stray off the track for big points.

GRABBING HANDS: With big air always try to maximise the multiplier by squeezing lots of grabs in.

COURSE FIVE

TOKYO MEGAPLEX



Short-cuts are few, obstacles are plenty. As long as you stay out of trouble and use the pinball switches carefully, a Gold medal is assured.

❶ PRE-WIND INTO FAN

After the starting line, you'll hit a huge rotor-fan tube. You get ludicrous airtime, so keep pulling grabs to increase your adrenaline bar. Take care on landing because space is tight. Wily players will land on the rails for a speed-boosting grind. In Show-Off mode, it's essential to pre-wind and release a spin before you hit the tunnel to really max out your scores – once again, diagonal twisting tricks score highest. A rail landing will grab point-multiplying snowflakes.

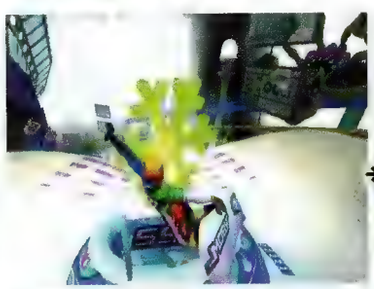
RISK: 2 **RETURN:** 6 (out of ten)

DROP-IN CENTRE: Coming out of air in the right place can make the difference between Gold and Silver in Show-off.

❷ JUMP TO FAN BOOST

Immediately afterwards, you'll spot a green jump ramp leading to another rotor fan. Align carefully and boost jump to hit the middle of the fan and receive a gust of air – it provides invaluable time to stock up on grab points. Alternatively, ride over the blue switch before the ramp to disable the fan. Jump as usual and crash into the short-cut tunnel below.

RISK: 2 **RETURN:** 5 (out of ten)



BLOW UP: As well as causing pain, the courses can also end a welcome helping hand.

HOW HIGH? With the fan on you can make the most of the invaluable air time.

❸ GREEN SWITCH HIT

The huge pinball bumper posts can really screw up your racing line, so why not disable them with the floor switches? The green switch shown here removes the whole section before you. Use the open banks to score even more tricks. This is essential in Show-Off mode.

RISK: 1 **RETURN:** 7 (out of ten)

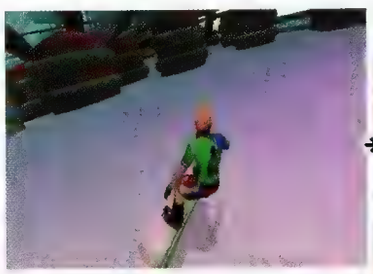
POINT AND CLICK: The forest of bumpers will seriously hamper your progress.

CLEAN AIR: Without them it's a simple downward slope to the next section of the course.

❹ GET RED WITH SWITCH

In Show-Off mode there's an easily reachable, though not entirely obvious, red snowflake to be snaffled. Instead of leaping onto the panelled glass roof with the *SSX* barriers, continue along the bottom layer of the track. Weave through the bumpers as shown, heading down the middle towards the switch illustrated. Clip it and a pneumatic ramp rises from the floor. Boost hard and hit a mega-jump to crash through the glass roof towards the red snowflake above. You can grab over 25,000 points with a well timed flip, which really takes the pressure off.

RISK: 3 **RETURN:** 9 (out of ten)



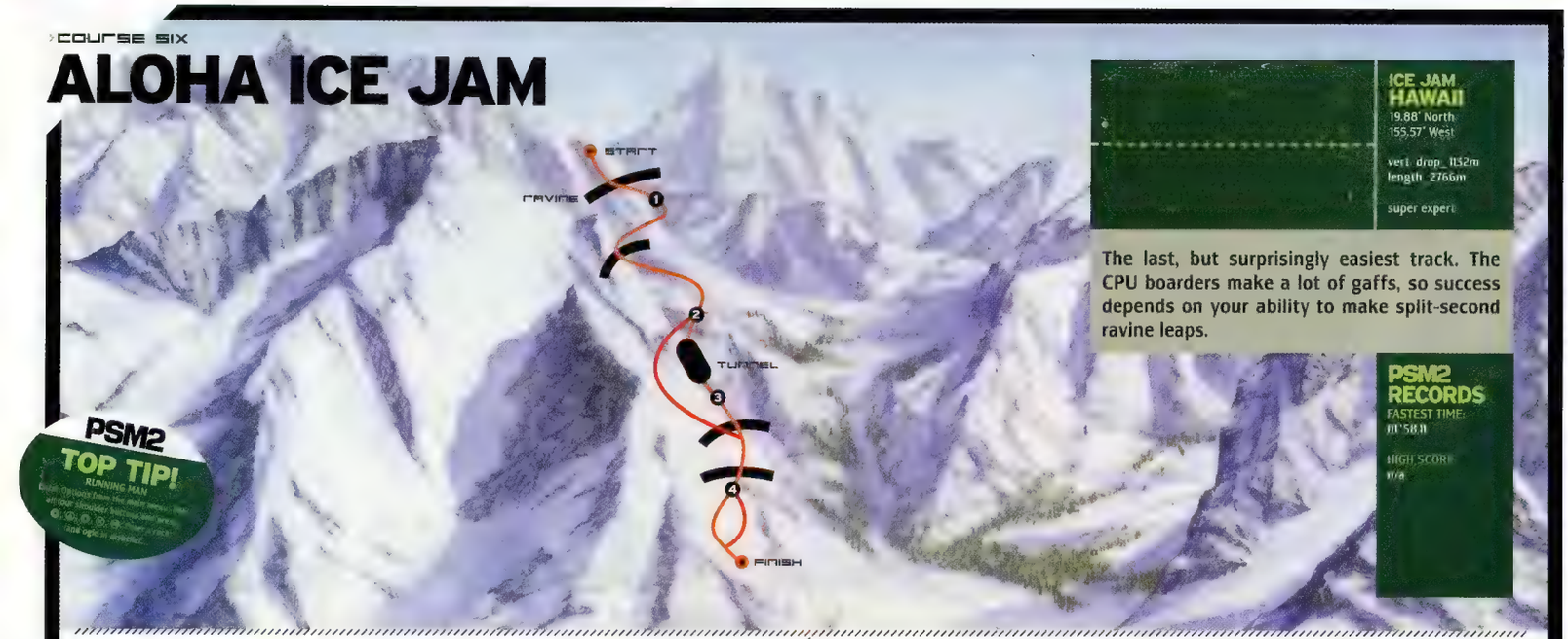
PUSH THE BUTTON: There're plenty of on/off switches in Tokyo Megaplex...

MIGHT AS WELL JUMP: ...in Show-Off they can help, but during races they can be a royal pain in the arse.

INTO THE RED: These are the targets if you're going to get anywhere near Gold.

COURSE SIX

ALOHA ICE JAM



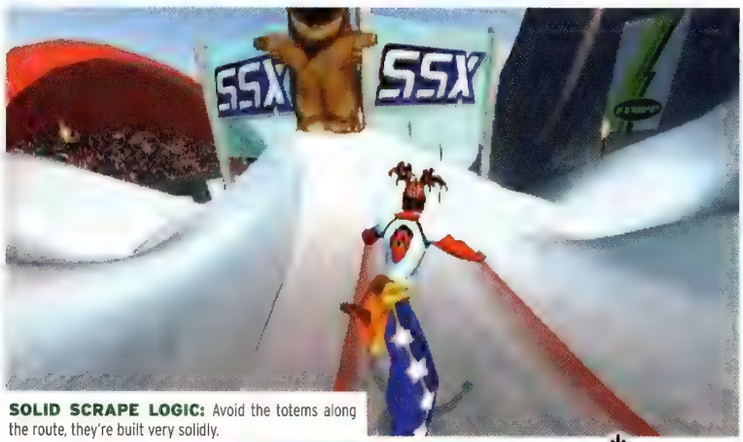
The last, but surprisingly easiest track. The CPU boarders make a lot of gaffs, so success depends on your ability to make split-second ravine leaps.

PSM2 TOP TIP! RUNNING MAN

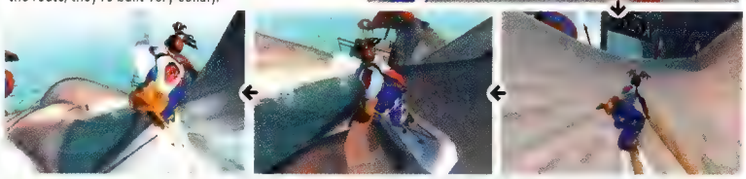
❶ SSX BARS

After the first ravine drop, you get two corner-cutting *SSX* logos to burst through in quick succession. Take them.

RISK: 2 **RETURN:** 6 (out of ten)



SOLID SCRAPE LOGIC: Avoid the totems along the route, they're built very solidly.

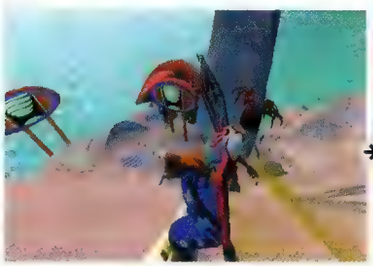


SPLIT DECISION: Pre-wind for the leap, pick your spot to break through, then take advantage of the air.

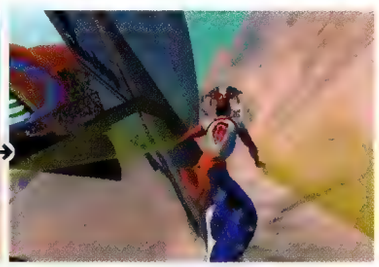
❷ RAVINE RAIL CROSS

Ignore the glass tunnel and carve sharp right. After the small drop, continue right to the thin overground path. Follow it until it drops away and perform a 90° jump – you should land onto a boardslide over the ravine. Tough, but you'll look the business.

RISK: 6 **RETURN:** 7 (out of ten)



GOING DOWN: Always remember that the most obvious route is not always the quickest.

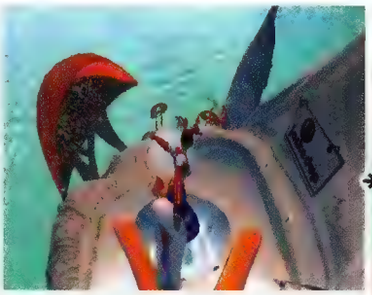


ABOVE THE RIM: Getting high's a top way of appreciating the courses dynamics - just look at that grandstand.

❸ BIG TIP

Dodge the bollard that moves left and right to enter the glass tunnel. A pneumatic jump pad pops up and allows you to launch a huge boosted jump into a tunnel deep below – where another trick boost and mega-jump awaits you. Looks great, saves time.

RISK: 3 **RETURN:** 7 (out of ten)



OFF THE WALL: Hold on to your lunch. you'll be dropping down onto a sheer snow slope...

FREE FALL: No parachute available for this route. unfortunately. Nice fireworks, mind.

THAT WAY INCLINED: This is about as steep as it gets on the Aloha course, so make the most of the ride.

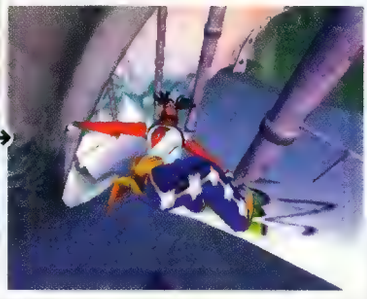
❹ SSX LEFT TUNNEL

After the final ravine jump with the red/black bars, duck left to hit the *SSX* sign. It takes you through a winding tunnel full of pipes. Jump them and collect the trick boost at the bottom.

RISK: 1 **RETURN:** 5 (out of ten)

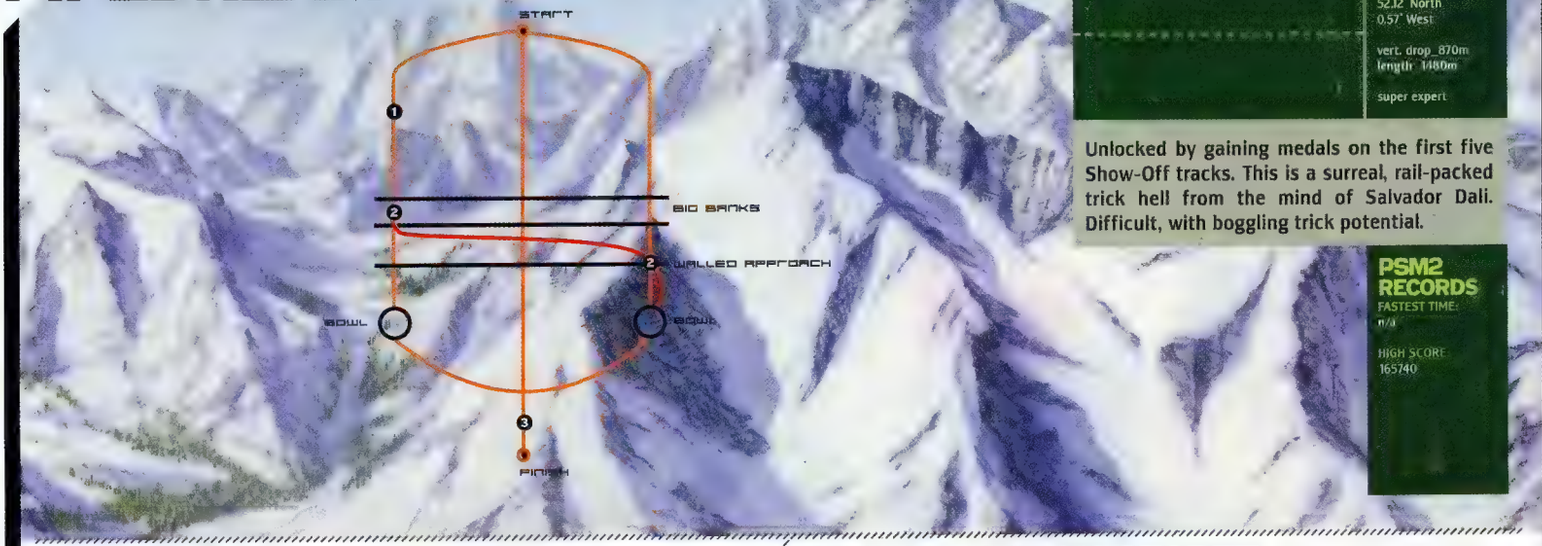
SNOW DROP: You'll build up some fearsome speed on this sheer downward slope.

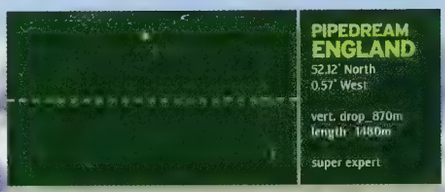
SPOT ON: Miss the grind and you'll find yourself at the bottom of a rather nasty ravine.



HIDDEN TRACK

PIPEDREAM



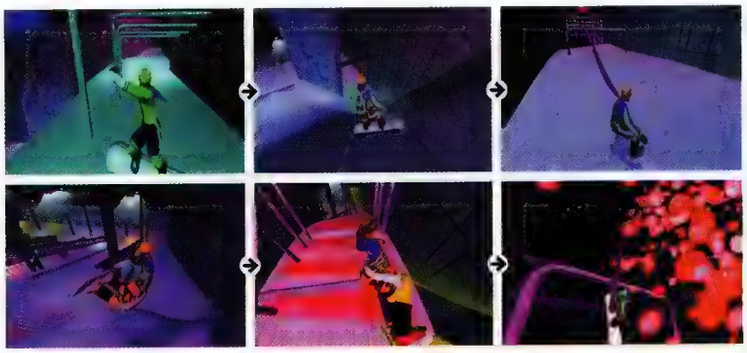


Unlocked by gaining medals on the first five Show-Off tracks. This is a surreal, rail-packed trick hell from the mind of Salvador Dali. Difficult, with boggling trick potential.

❶ RED LOOP

If you miss an opportunity to score big, you'll never get the Gold. Fact. You need to hit the 360° rail loop near the start line to get a head start. Veer right (or left) after the start and slip into one of the branching paths. Follow them to the course wall, sneaking in a quick jump or twist on the flat to gain some boost. Then turn left, near to the right-hand side wall, keeping an eye on the loop beneath. Don't scream downhill but edge gingerly towards your target to ensure careful alignment. Try to hit the rail side-on and keep correcting your path throughout the loop – use that boost to lock you in position. Leap off and claim 25,000 points plus.

RISK: 2 **RETURN:** 8 (out of ten)

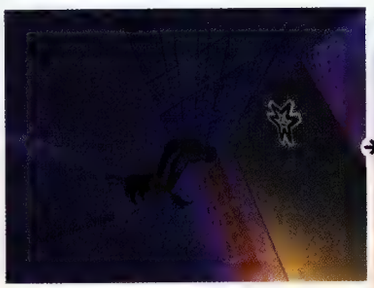


HONEY NUT LOOPS: This all depends on the run-up to the rail as we've said, and it's important that you've got enough in the adrenaline tank to get you all the way round without dropping onto your head.

❷ MEGA SWITCH SECRET

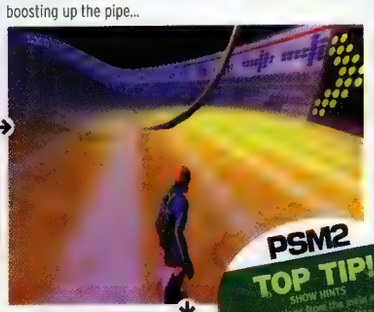
This is as obscure as things get. Head down the first track section until you reach the back-to-back vertical-drop walls. You need to be heading in from the furthest right-hand side near the wall. Boost a front flip to hit the vertical wall near the top – the camera will reveal a black teddy bear icon on the wall opposite. Swoop down the wall and front-flip onto the teddy, which will disappear. Continue as usual to the next section and head to the upwards rail on the far left side. Boost up the rail to hit a blue tunnel emerging on top of some excellent ice trick bowls. Spend a minute here doing half-pipe style flips. Leave the bowl using the boost alone, and jerk the joypad as you leave the lip. Keep circling the bowl until you magically disappear. Now all you've got to do is survive the wormhole tunnels...

RISK: 6 **RETURN:** 9 (out of ten)



SWITCH IT: This'll take some doing, but a combination of speed and timing will nail it.

ANTI-GRAVITY: Start your impossible mission by boosting up the pipe...



PSM2 TOP TIP!

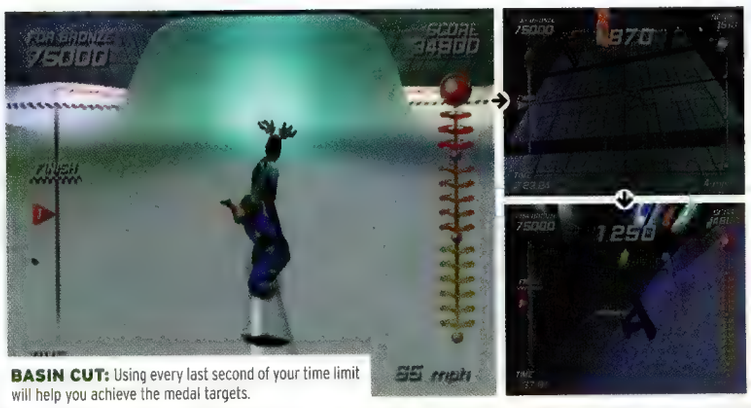
SHOW HINTS

Enter Options from the pause menu, hold all four shoulder buttons and press ○, ○, ○, ○, ⊗. Disable the tips text by repeating the move.

❸ LAST MINUTE TRICK TIP

If you've reached the end of the track and are short of your points target, don't give up. Use the last bank with the orange snowflake like a half pipe, and build up speed to ride back up the slope. Keep alternating this motion, pulling tricks at the apex of both slopes. Keep your finger on boost and upwards of 40,000 points could be yours – the difference between medal placings.

RISK: 2 **RETURN:** 7 (out of ten)



BASIN CUT: Using every last second of your time limit will help you achieve the medal targets.

SPIRAL TAP: This is a bit of a strange descent. It'll seem very disorientating at first.

>HIDDEN TRACK

UNTRACKED

No medals, no trick bonuses, just you and your board and acres of cold powder. Leap out the helicopter and work all of that edgy competitiveness out of your system.

1 CUT LOOSE

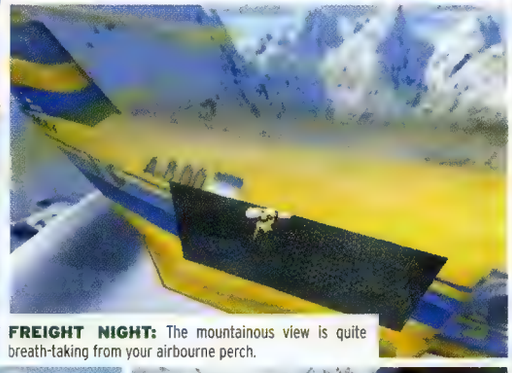
OK, you've got us. We've been holding this one back. This is the super-secret prize for snatching Gold on the Aloha Ice Jam. It's not immediately obvious when you've unlocked it, as the course only exists in the Free Ride mode. Just for once, forget about the short-cuts and your aggressive rivals and cut loose on the mother of all powder mountains. Let your imagination run riot and your spirit dance free. If that's what wets your whistle.

APACHE DROPOUT: The inaccessible nature of the run means that the only way onto the summit is via air support. Strap yourself in and prepare to take a leap into the unknown.

MORE!
EXTRA TIPS... For a full list of developer's hints, plus a trick book listing for every character turn to pg70 of your exclusive PSM2 tips book.

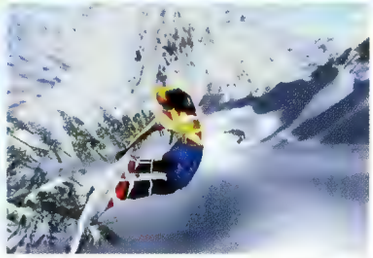
HIGH HOPES: The ride manages to be thrilling and relaxing at the same time.

AIR FLICK: The amount of drops gives you plenty of time to experiment with grabs.



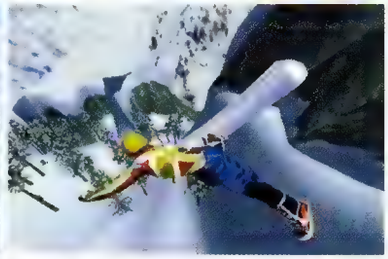
FREIGHT NIGHT: The mountainous view is quite breath-taking from your airbourne perch.

OUT ON A LIMB: Still plenty of grinding opportunities, though. Fallen trees make ideal rails.



OFF-PEAK: Even if you blow a flip, you're guaranteed a forgiving landing in the dense powder.

VIRGIN AIR WAYS: The snow's untouched, the only trails on this baby will be yours.



PINE BARRIER: The only obstacles in your way are monster pines that tower over the snow.

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DR ZEUSS AND CORNETTO'S TECHNOLOGY LABORATORY

PSM2 PAYS PEANUTS FOR SOME BRAIN-POPPING JIGGERY-POKERY

EMOTION ENGINE? WHAT THE HELL IS THAT?

Simian scientists from Earth's future take time-out from human-baiting, and share their knowledge about PS2 for the good of all mankind... and a bag of salty nuts.

LABORATORY ASSISTANT: Robin Alway

Fellow brainy ape scientist Dr Zeuss and myself have been sent on a "presentation skills" course. Our cheeky gorilla paymasters think the use of an overhead projector and flipchart, plus meaningless buzzwords like 'thinking out of the box' would make for more interesting lectures on PS2 tech stuff. The hairy fools. Anyway, this month we will delve into the very heart of Sony's wonder box – the Emotion Engine, itself. Dr Zeuss...

Thank you, young Cornetto. And welcome humans. Let us concentrate on the PS2's 128bit CPU (that's Central Processing Unit, thickies), the Emotion Engine. Now, all gaming devices have CPUs in them but rarely do they achieve as much fame as the PlayStation 2's Emotion Engine. Partly, this is because of the snappy name – so much more memorable than the N64's R4300i. But also because, to use a phrase popular with young chimps, *it rocks*. It's simply the most powerful piece of silicon there's ever been in a games console and it's a major part of what makes PS2 unique.

But how does it compare to what you'd find in a top range PC, Dr Z?

Well, although a super-specced PC might have a CPU that's faster on paper, it's worth remembering that the PS2's Emotion Engine doesn't have to run a wide range of applications. It's been custom created first and foremost to handle mind-quaking 3D games rather than spreadsheets, word processing and other fascinating PC utilities. A good thing.

"THE EMOTION ENGINE HAS BEEN CREATED TO HANDLE MIND-QUAKING 3D GAMES"

So how does it work, wise Doctor?

The Emotion Engine handles two main types of calculations. The first one is Geometry calculation – the sums that work out which commands to send to the Graphics Synthesiser chip, so it knows what to render on screen. The second type of calculation being performed by the Emotion engine is World or Behaviour Simulation. This covers all your enemy AI as well as how the game world should respond – the amount of friction between your tyres and the road when powersliding on *Ridge 5*, for example. Think of the Emotion Engine as PS2's brain.

Is it different from what's lurked in the innards of previous games systems?

Very different, young Cornetto. Before PS2, most consoles communicated data between different parts of their set-up (say the processors and memory) through a data bus. This limits the overall speed of the machine, particularly with processor-intensive games. The Emotion Engine, however, has been designed to directly access the DRAM, or dynamic RAM, where information being used for whatever the CPU is working on is stored. When developers get to grips with PS2's unique architecture, you'll really start to see the difference between it and other consoles.

Has anyone tapped into the full power of the Emotion Engine yet?

Not yet, my chimpy friend. One of the most important things about the chip is its two co-processor chips, VU-0 and VU-1 – the vector units. Ideally, these should work in conjunction with the Emotion Engine, freeing it up to do its central processing duties while the two nippy vector units help out with specific tasks – like compiling lists of calculations for the Graphics synthesiser. The real beauty of PS2 is that there's plenty of flexibility in how the Emotion Engine and these two co-processors are used. So, talented programmers can use them differently to suit their code. The result: better games than you weak, bare-palmed fools can currently comprehend...

Thank you Doctor, month by month they are learning...

Excellent. Don't get me wrong, I'm still pro-clubbing and experimentation. But sometimes if you look closely there does seem to be a flicker of intelligence in their savage eyes. Well, until next month...

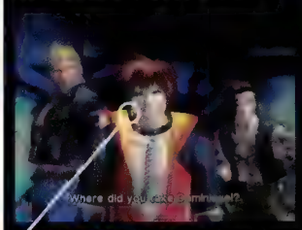
Yes, we will see you again soon. In the meantime send any PS2 queries to us via your fellow human on PSM2. But please, don't make reference to Dr Zeuss' gingerness again. Goodbye, and remember... ape shall not kill ape. PSM2

CORNETTO'S CASE STUDY

When the PS2 was originally unveiled in Japan, the guiding light behind PlayStation, Ken Kutaragi, said: "Tremendous power will be required to achieve a higher level of computer entertainment, and our dream is to combine music and movies to create this next form of computer entertainment. We call this the Emotion Synthesis, or Emotion Engine." He than added that the Emotion Engine will allow the player to "feel nuances that were previously unattainable". Although initial PS2 games only hint at this, we're looking to the likes of *MGS2* for our first full-on experience of the Emotion Engine in all its immersive glory

ANIMAL TESTING!

Do not worry about the cage doors and cattle prods in the testing area – mere regulation. This month our monkey magnifier looks for signs of emotion...



BOAT RACE: The Emotion Engine allows for more realistic facial expressions than most humans can manage. Check out mardy old Sion from Square's forthcoming *The Bouncer*.

LIGHT REIGN: With this microscopic level of detail, expect to get more immersed in *MGS2* than's strictly healthy.

CROFT ORIGINAL: As this first shot proves, Lara will look more real than ever on PS2. So you'll be more upset when she falls off a cliff and crumples in a bone-snapping heap.

SUPER GRAN: *GT3* will let you see and feel the tiniest suspension jolt. Just the kind of nuance that wasn't possible on PSone.

GRIND FORCE: *Madden 2001*'s player physics are so realistic, every collision's as complex as an F1 game's crash.

"PSM2 MEETS NUMBER TWOS - THORNY ISSUES EXPLORED ON THE THRONE"

INVESTIGATOR: Daniel Griffiths

DIGITAL VERSATILE DISC

IT'S LIKE A COMPACT DISC... ONLY BETTER

What does it all mean? What is a DVD, why should I start buying hundreds of them and *how do* they get a movie onto a 12cm silver disc..?

OK. We know you. You want your PS2 for the games, don't you? PSM2 readers know the score. You demand to play the world's finest videogames. On the world's most powerful games machine. The small matter of 'playing DVDs' on the thing isn't the reason you bought the successor to PlayStation. Right?

However, there're deviants out there that will be buying their PS2s to play DVDs. Some are so sick and twisted that they'll be buying their PS2s *just* to play DVDs.

But then, why not. After all it makes a lot of sense. Your PS2 is a £299 Sony branded DVD player. If you're going to spend that amount of money on a Sony branded DVD player, you may as well get one that plays PS2 games too – should you fancy trying one of them new fangled 'videogames'.

WHAT'S IT LIKE THEN?

But how does it actually perform when confronted with a DVD disc instead of a blue PS2 one? We've carried out extensive tests using 'eyes' and 'ears' and can conclude that it really does do the business on the audio/visual front.

The PAL UK PlayStation is still in the mind of a Sony employee, so we carried out our tests with a Japanese model PS2. This involves the slightly comedy procedure of configuring and remembering to insert the Memory Card with the DVD decoder on it (see the box on the opposite page), but other than this fiddly arse, the process of playing DVDs, and those all important results, are identical.

EYES READY

Once again we turned our attentions to our trusty Japanese copy of The Matrix in order to demonstrate PS2's power. With its fast-moving sequences, bold black and white scenes and dynamite surround soundtrack it's the ideal way to put any system through its paces.

PS2 coped admirably with the pixel assault, but if you looked really, *really* closely, black edges flickered slightly and static backgrounds had movement – being updated with slightly different shades – and giving a blurry focusing effect rather than being locked solid pin-sharp perfect.

But this is a problem in common with all mid-price DVD players. Another good place to catch out a DVD player is during the credits. Watch for flickery motion around the titles and cast and crew credits, especially if they're white out of a dark background.

On our fantastic no-expense-spared Pioneer DVD player, however, we encountered no such fuzzing. The conclusion? The PS2 plays movies like a £300 DVD player.

EARS READY

While the quality of visuals is easy to assess between different machines, judging good quality sound from different machines is a long and laborious, er... complete waste of time really.

We set up our PS2 with a Surround Sound amplifier and listened to the results. Very nice. Then we set up our Pioneer player and listened to the results. And? Exactly the bleedin' same. The conclusion? PS2 sounds brilliant.

IT'S A SET UP...

The trick to making the most of your DVD playback is to treat your PS2 like a lady. Not ply it with fine wine in St Tropez and a week away from the ironing, but ensure that you have the very best add-ons and gadgets strapped on board.

Firstly you'll need to ensure that you're properly SCARTed up. You get one of these leads in the box with your machine, so there's no excuse not to – unless you're still using your Gran's black and white portable as your chosen viewing medium. In which case you need to get down the shops and pick up a new TV.

Next is the sound. While your SCART TV will sound great (you may have a model with stereo speakers or even surround channels), you really need more hardware if you're to get the most out of your DVDs. The digital-out socket on the back of your PS2 pipes hot digital sound out, and down, a digital connection lead (not supplied). This is designed for plugging into a separate, dedicated Dolby Digital amplifier and is the only way to get at the rear channel and centre channel sound encoded on (practically) all DVDs. It's just like being at the pictures.

The only downer is that such equipment is still painfully expensive. The Surround Sound outfit we use cost £400 for the speakers and £450 for the amplifier. Fortunately there're cheaper alternatives, one of the best being Creative Labs' upcoming Digital Decoder Box and Speaker Set for £200.

We've seen the set in operation (expect a full review next issue) and it not only looks the business (matching the purple and black of the PS2), but it sounds great too – with top quality PC speaker company Cambridge Soundworks being responsible for the actual innards. It even comes with a remote control for armchair noise adjustment. Ah yes, remote controls...

CONTROLLED EXPLOSION

Perhaps the most essential addition of all to enhance your DVD enjoyment is one of the ever-increasing range of DVD remote control units. There are models from Saitek, Logic 3, Fire, everyone, it seems, apart from Sony. Yet.

SPECIAL FEATURES

NOT FAMILIAR WITH THE WORLD OF DVD? WHERE'VE YOU BEEN?

DVDs not only store your favourite films in pristine digital form but, thanks to the vast storage space on board, they're often crammed with additional extra features and stuff. So, when you put in a disc you'll be confronted with a menu offering you the option of watching with an Italian dialogue track or subtitles – in Cantonese!

More exciting is the proposition of vast 'making of' documentaries, often notching up another 45 minutes or so of entertainment. Our favourite though is the 'director's commentary' where the director or stars of the film chat about the action on screen. Brilliant. And when you're done messing about, you can watch the film...

DVD QUESTIONS

Since PSM2#01 we've received a huge mailbag concerning the ins and outs of PS2's DVD capabilities. Can it be chipped? Does it play DVD extras? What Region is the UK DVD? The list is endless, so we've addressed these technical FAQs, and many more, in our feature on pg54. We'll be running a regular FAQ column, so send your questions to the usual address.

Kobal Collection/Boutindijk, Jaap/Dreamworks/Universal

They all work in the same way, plugging into joypad port one and allowing you to control the playback functions of your PS2 from your armchair. Yes, with your straight-out-of-the-box PS2 you'll have to play, freeze, fast forward, access menus and all those other essential commands with your PS2 DualShock 2. Each function is mapped to a different button on the pad. Not exactly ideal eh? All of the new controllers therefore come in two halves – one bit that plugs into the PS2, the other being the remote control unit itself. Fire's unit features a sensor that plugs into the PS2 then, via a long lead, can be positioned away from the PS2, perhaps on the top of the TV. This recognises the fact that you may not fancy having your PS2 on display and may prefer to tuck it away in a cupboard. Saitek's new remote control system cleverly features another joypad port on the front so that you don't have to disconnect the sensor when you want to plug in a joypad and play a game – saving vital wear and tear on both the sensor and your PS2.

"IF YOU'RE GOING TO SPEND £299 ON A SONY BRANDED DVD PLAYER, YOU MAY AS WELL GET ONE THAT PLAYS PS2 GAMES TOO"

Now there's no reason not to make the most of your PS2 entertainment station. You've got the sound, the digitally crisp picture and the armchair control at you fingertips. Just don't forget to buy some games, though. **PSM2**

DVD DOO DAH

THE JAPANESE DVD SYSTEM – OH DEAR...

In the UK you'll be able to fire up your PS2, put in a DVD and have the Browser detect the disc and play it. Bongo! However, it's a different story in Japan where the machine was first released.

Japanese model PS2s don't come with the DVD decoding built in. Sure, they have a DVD drive, but the program to play the discs comes on a separate Utility Disc that must be downloaded to a Memory Card. Then you have to ensure that this card is in the slot if you want to play a DVD disc.

And, as if that wasn't clumsy enough, due to someone, somewhere cutting a few corners to get the machine and games in store for launch day, saved games of *Ridge 5* overwrote a bit of the DVD program on the card meaning you had to reinstall it. Not very elegant and certainly not very Sony...

BOG MOUTH!

THE HISTORY OF DVD

Our expert mates on What DVD? explain how Sony and Matsushita glued two great ideas together...

"You know the story: Sony and Philips invent the CD – everyone goes mental for it. The next evolution of the digital disc is a slightly more hazy story.

"After squeezing 480 floppy discs onto a single CD in 1980, technology companies had a crazed lust for data storage. Philips even managed to get half a movie onto the thing via a system called MPEG to compress video and sound sufficiently to squeeze 45 minutes of the stuff onto a CD. The format was called CDi (they also made some hopeless games for it too), and movies (or VideoCDs) came on two discs that you swapped over halfway through.

"Unfortunately it only ever reached video cassette quality and often, thanks to digital blockiness (called 'artefacts', where the pixels and blocks become distractingly visible) they didn't even reach that.

"No, the next step (after a dalliance with MiniDisc) was to up the storage capacity of CDs by squeezing the tiny pits etched in the silicon in the disc closer together to get more on. These finer pits required a new type of laser to read them however.

"And the innovation didn't end there. After universally recognising that smaller pits was the way to go the world's technology companies split into two factions about where to go next. Matsushita (who make Panasonic and Technics stuff) and Pioneer devised an amazing dual-layer system where TWO of the new silicon layers could be put in the same disc and the laser *refocused* to look at either of them. Voila – instant storage doubling!

"Sony and Philips however had their own distinctly less elegant solution – they simply glued two discs together so, by flipping the CD you got a second set of data! Who won? Both of them! The final DVD comes in a multitude of forms after they all got together and decided to implement both Matsushita's dual layer system and Sony's dual side system. You can get single layer discs, double side discs (which you've got to flip over), dual layer discs and (the Daddy of them all) the dual side dual layer disc!

"Most discs are dual layer meaning that you can enjoy a whole movie (compressed using the much improved MPEG2) and a host of extras on a CD-sized disc without having to leave your armchair."

Alistair Lindsay,

NEXT MONTH

WE LOOK AT PS2 GAME SEQUELS

Are games going down the Hollywood path of profitable familiarity? Or is it simply a case of having to wait patiently for innovative games to arrive? We investigate the future of the game title franchise.

PSM2@FUTURENET.CO.UK

THE ENVIRONMENTS LOOK PRETTY LUSH, AND SOME OF THE CREATURES WE'VE CREATED ARE VERY WEIRD

"We're not going for characters that burble on to you for five minutes every time you click on them"

GAVIN RUMMERY

TEAM LEADER OF CORE DESIGN'S PROJECT EDEN

Talks to Jonathan Bryant

Gavin Rummery is the head of the *Project Eden* team and has definitely found it a challenge cramming all the game's many features from the PC version into Sony's black box. He previously designed the Level Editor for both *Tomb Raider* and *Tomb Raider 2* and still has a soft spot for both titles. We managed to tear him away from his keyboard long enough to answer a few questions about his latest creation.

THE GAME'S SET IN A HUGE FUTURISTIC CITY MODELLED ON JUDGE DREDD'S MEGACITY ONE. HOW MANY LEVELS CAN WE EXPECT, AND HOW HAVE YOU CREATED A SENSE OF THE VAST CITY THAT SURROUNDS THE CHARACTERS?

At the moment there are 11 levels, though they're each huge and some may need to be split in two before the game ships.

HOW MANY SUB-MISSIONS CAN WE HOPE TO FIND ON EACH LEVEL AND WHAT SORT OF THING WILL THEY INVOLVE?

There's quite a few sub-missions on each level in order to complete them. For example, on one level you're required to kill a creature and send its body up for analysis at the labs. On another, you need to get the power back on before you can access a lift to another level.

WE'VE HEARD TALK OF THERE BEING POWER PLANTS AND SHOPPING MALLS IN THE GAME. DOES THIS MEAN THERE'RE LOTS OF CITIZENS THAT YOU CAN INTERACT WITH?

I wouldn't say 'lots' – we're not going for characters that burble on to you for five minutes every time you click on them, because that gets annoying. What we've got is certain key characters that have vital information for you.

YOU'VE CREATED A WHOLE NEW GAME ENGINE FOR THIS PROJECT. WHAT SURPRISES ARE IN STORE FOR PLAYERS?

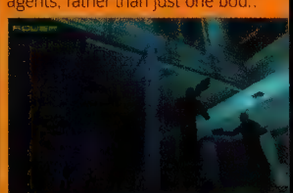
Well, the environments look pretty lush, and some of the creatures we've created are very weird. The fact that some of them morph should keep players on their toes too – what looks like a rat may in fact be a monster in disguise.

THE ENVIRONMENTS ARE REPORTEDLY FILLED WITH MULTI-TEXTURE AND PARTICLE EFFECTS. WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR LEVEL DESIGN, AND CAN WE EXPECT ANYTHING OUT OF THE ORDINARY?

It basically means shiny things look shiny and smoky things look smoky. Its visual stuff that doesn't really effect the gameplay – though obviously walking into a raging fire or poisonous gas cloud is not good for your health.

ALL YOU NEED TO KNOW

Project Eden is a new PS2 action/strategy title from Core Design – The House of Lara. Set within a futuristic mega-city, where buildings have risen into the clouds, the game puts you in charge of a team of Urban Protection Agents who are initially called in to investigate a malfunctioning meat processor. As the game progresses, however, events take a dark twist and instead of the usual street-level scum, you're head-to-head with a bunch of kill crazed mutants. The game's 'angle' is that you can take control of the entire team of four agents, rather than just one bod..



WE ALL GOT A BIT TWITCHY WHEN WE HEARD ABOUT THE INCLUSION OF 'FOG'. THIS ISN'T USED TO COVER UP REDRAW PROBLEMS IS IT?

No, our fog is 'volumetric'. It means there are patches of fog to add atmosphere that you can walk in and out of. But you can always see through it, so we're not using it to hide a limited draw distance.

THE TEAM YOU CONTROL ARE FROM THE URBAN PROTECTION AGENCY, WHO ARE THEY AND HOW DO THEY DIFFER FROM EACH OTHER?

Carter is the leader of the group – only he can access high security UPA equipment, and only he will carry out interrogations of suspects and witnesses. Minoko is the computer expert – only she can hack computer systems to gain access to cameras and unlock doors etc. Andre is the engineer – he's the only one who can repair things, and can also locate weak spots in things to lay explosives. Amber is the cyborg – she can go through hazardous environments like the aforementioned raging fires and gas clouds without suffering too much. She's also more heavily armoured and has greater fire-power than the others.

CAN YOU GIVE US SOME EXAMPLES OF HOW THE WHOLE TEAM WILL WORK INDIVIDUALLY, AND AS A UNIT?

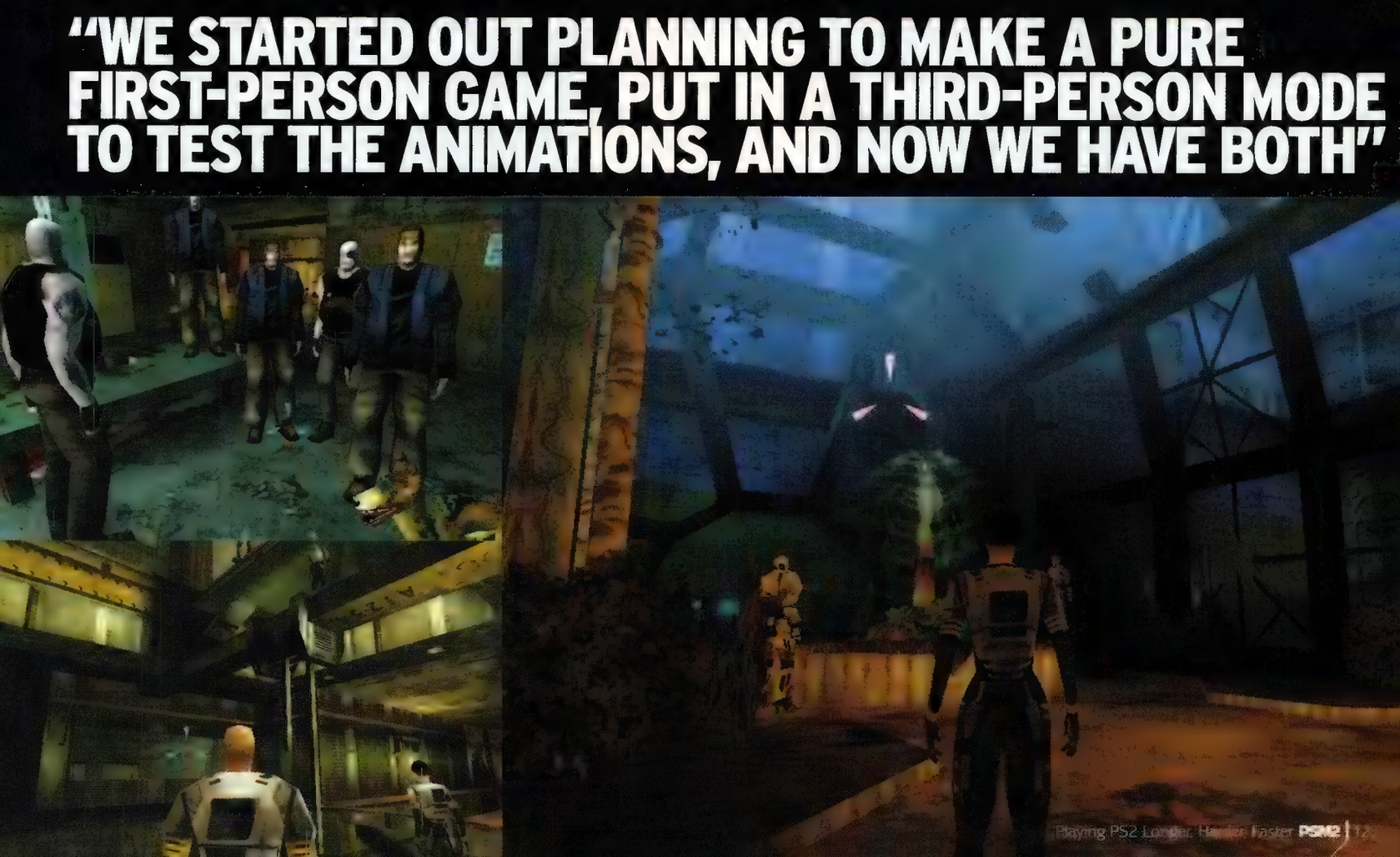
Individually, they use their different skills to overcome particular obstacles – for example: Amber goes through gas-filled pipes to turn off the supply while Minoko remotely unlocks the valves to let her through.

As a team, they can all fight together (some creatures are too strong to take on alone), or some characters can be left to guard certain sections or hold levers in place.

HOW HAVE YOU AVOIDED THE POTENTIAL 'TO-ING AND FRO-ING' ACTION OF THE ONE-PLAYER GAME? FOR INSTANCE, HOW DO YOU PREVENT IT FROM BEING A CHORE RETURNING ALL YOUR TEAM MEMBERS TO ONE POINT?

You can use the 'follow me' function to move your characters as a unit from one place to the next. We haven't gone for anything more complicated (no waypoints or map screens) because we want the players to always be in control. It's very frustrating to play squad games where you can set up paths for characters and then they get killed somewhere along the line, and you've no idea what happened to them. So we've avoided it altogether. It shouldn't be a chore because no character can get far without encountering a situation where they need one of the others. ►

"WE STARTED OUT PLANNING TO MAKE A PURE FIRST-PERSON GAME, PUT IN A THIRD-PERSON MODE TO TEST THE ANIMATIONS, AND NOW WE HAVE BOTH"



GAVIN RUMMERY

SO CAN WE EXPECT A THIRD-PERSON ADVENTURE MUCH LIKE THOSE OF THE TOMB RAIDER SERIES?
Sort of. We didn't set out to make it that way, but I guess teams tend to like certain styles of play, and as most of us worked on *Tomb Raider* we've ended up with something that definitely has similarities. For example, we started out planning to make a pure first-person game, put in a third-person mode to test the animations, and now have both, with 'third' as the default option.

IT'S RUMOURED THAT THERE ARE SOME INNOVATIONS IN CHARACTER ANIMATION INCLUDED IN THE GAME. IS THERE ANYTHING YOU'RE PARTICULARLY PROUD OF?
The characters all have very smooth animation because we can dynamically move from one animation to another, over as many frames as we want. We can also play our animations at any speed too, hence the TimeShock weapon which allows you to slow down enemies and equipment. Plus, we can play multiple animations on a single character so they can be pressing a button as they walk past for instance.

WHEN YOU SWITCH CONTROL BETWEEN CHARACTERS CAN WE EXPECT THEM TO BEHAVE THEMSELVES OR WILL THEY GO LOOK FOR SOMETHING LETHAL TO PLAY WITH?
Again, the emphasis is on player control, so when you leave a character they will stay where they are unless you specifically ask them to follow you. They're smart enough to know when they're under fire, and to not use an inappropriately powerful weapon against a weedy foe.

WHO ARE THE 'ENEMY' IN THE GAME AND WHAT SORT OF AI CAN WE EXPECT FROM THEM IN COMBAT SITUATIONS?
The enemy starts out as gang members and other low-life but, as the game progresses, you encounter some strange mutated adversaries – but as finding out what's going on is the point of the game, I'll say no more.

SO ARE THE MUTANTS BEHIND THE CHOICE OF PROJECT EDEN AS A TITLE?
That's right – it was the lawyers fault. We just wanted to call it Eden, but you can't copyright that and *Project Eden* was the best we could come up with after two years of calling it just Eden.

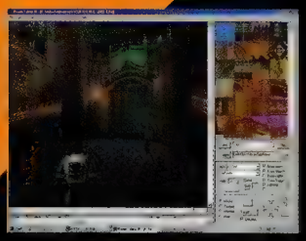
WE'VE HAD SOME READERS COMPLAINING ABOUT HOW ADVENTURE GAMES ALWAYS HAVE SOME KIND OF 'ULTIMATE EVIL' AS THE MAIN ANTAGONIST. SO CAN WE LOOK FORWARD TO SOMETHING A LITTLE LESS OBVIOUS FROM PROJECT EDEN?
Definitely. There're no 'bio-weapon' research corporations in this game.

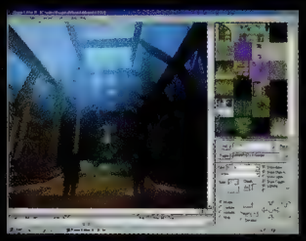
THE GAME'S ONLY OVER WHEN ALL OF YOUR TEAM DIE THANKS TO THE REGEN SYSTEM. HOW DOES THIS WORK?
Basically, we didn't want the game to end just because one team member died, so, instead of dying, each character is regenerated at the last ReGen point they tagged. And that's it really. It means you don't save/load every three seconds (in fact, you won't be allowed to – only on exit from the game will the current state be saved), so the flow of the game won't get interrupted. A bit like playing a multi-player deathmatch really.

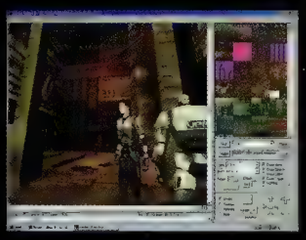
EXTRA EQUIPMENT CAN ALSO BE OBTAINED THROUGH THE REGENERATION SYSTEM. WHAT KIND OF TOOLS WILL THE TEAM GET TO USE AS A RESULT OF THIS?
The point of this is that the team has a 'team inventory' of stuff they can generate – so you can give the TimeShock to whoever you want, for example. Also, things like the Rover (a small exploration vehicle) can be generated and used, but if it gets destroyed you can just regenerate it. Same with mines and sentry gun tripods. So rather than playing the whole game stockpiling all your best equipment because 'you never know what might be round the next corner' – thus ending the game with loads of stuff you never got a chance to use – in *Project Eden* you can use it whenever you like because you can always destroy and regenerate it.

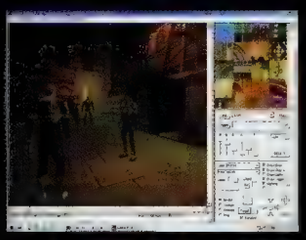
TELL US ABOUT THE VARIOUS EXPLOSIVE DEVICES THE TEAM WILL BE USING IN-GAME. AND WILL THERE ALSO BE A GOOD SELECTION OF PROJECTILE WEAPONS?
We're not going for zillions of weapons – just a few with different uses. As for projectile weapons, Amber has micro-rockets built into her arm, there're pipebomb style mines that can be thrown and detonated when you like, plus there's a DiscGun that fires bouncing explosive frisbees which detonate after a number of preprogrammed bounces.

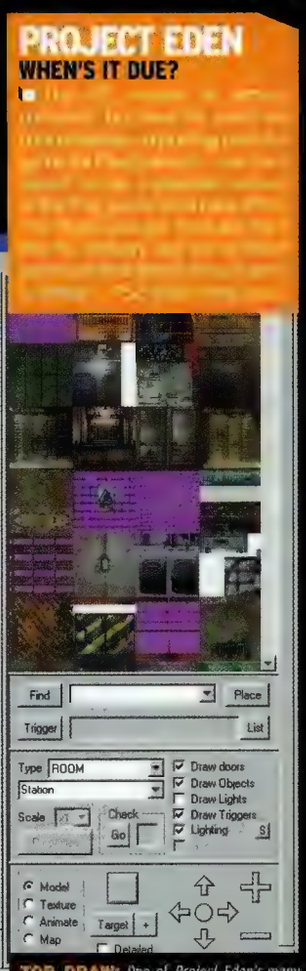
FINALLY, HOW WILL THE MULTI-PLAYER WORK ON PS2? CAN WE EXPECT A FOUR-SCREEN SPLIT USING THE MULTITAP 2, OR WILL YOU GO THE I-LINK ROUTE FOR A FULL-SCREEN MULTI-PLAYER EXPERIENCE?
It's going to be four-player split screen rather than i-Link. **PSM2**



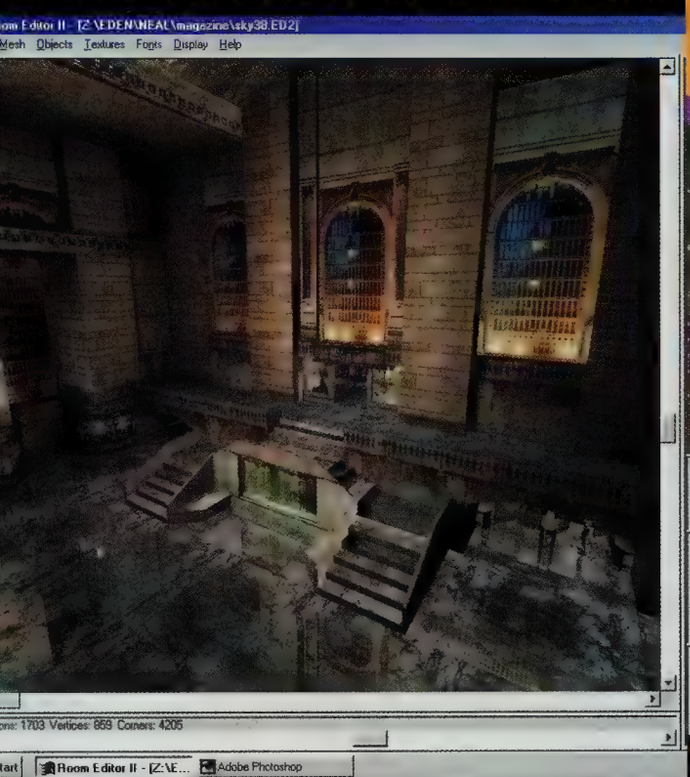








TOP DRAW: One of *Project Eden*'s many environments in development.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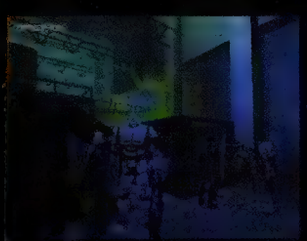

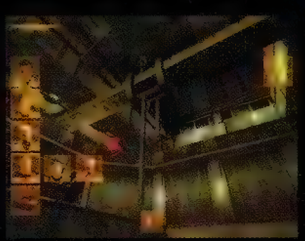

GANG OF FOUR: The members of your uniquely talented UPA team.

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Hideo Kojima responds to *your* suggestions for *MGS2*. Don't miss it!

Gran Turismo 3

PLUS!

PS2001

We detail all the games that are threatening to be massive hits next year. Screenshots, artwork *and* the developers' own hopes and dreams for the new wave of PS2 titles... in their own words. We'll be featuring *The Bouncer*, *GT3*, *Final Fantasy 10*, *Resident Evil 4* and *WipEout Fusion* to name just a few. It's going to be a whole new world out there, so don't miss out.

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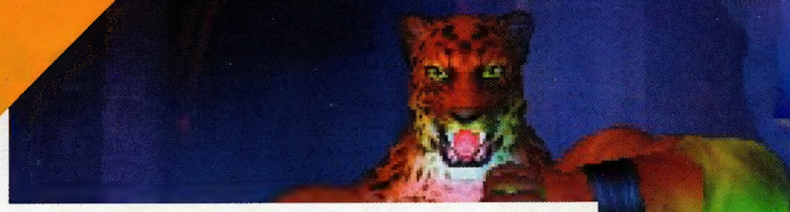

THE GOBBLING KING

A change *will* do you good, and *Tekken's* King needed it more than most

BY: Danny Wallace

Being happy in your employment is an important thing. We can see it in someone's eyes when their heart just isn't in their job. And it upsets us greatly. Which is why, when indulging in *Tekken*, we studiously avoid involving the character King in any way. It's not because we don't like him. It's just that, well, beneath that mask you can tell he'd rather be elsewhere.

Look at his official *Tekken* profile. The man's a bleedin' *orphanage manager*, for gawd's sakes. He *knows* what kind of example he's setting the little 'uns, and he *hates* it. He's no fighting man! He's a carer!

We decided enough was enough – King needs a new direction in life. He needs to get out of this whole Mexican wrestler deal. He needs a fresh start...

Now, there's this thing called the JVIS test. It's an American academic questionnaire, it takes an hour, and it consists of 289 separate choices you've got to make in order to find your ideal job. It features genuine choices, like:

QUESTION 5
What would you most enjoy doing?
A. Playing the romantic lead in a Hollywood film.
B. Working in a treatment relationship with emotionally disturbed people.

QUESTIONS 41
What would you most enjoy doing?
A. Perfecting a nightclub act.
B. Compiling a dictionary of current English usage.

As you can see, these were difficult choices. Would King prefer to help handicapped people become interested in preparing for a career, or would he prefer to drive speed boats? (Q 124).

We took the test on behalf of King. We took it seriously. We got into character, and we answered as honestly as we could. We were excited. We were on the verge of helping a man completely re-invent his life. And then we waited for the results...

They came back. We were shocked. But the experts had spoken.

According to the American academics who analysed the tests, our old masked mate King should really give up the fighting and go full-time into...

... POULTRY MANAGEMENT

We were disappointed. Where's the glamour? The rock 'n' roll? The drugs? The only upside seemed to be a life full of meaty birds.

But hey, if poultry *was* where King's interests really lay, then hell, that's what he should be concentrating on.

So we got to work. We faxed the American Poultry Association a copy of King's CV. We posted messages on dozens of Internet bulletin boards around the world. We gave the same CV to the Meat and Poultry Career Centre, where it still sits today. We sent e-mails to poultry farmers in America, Australia and New Zealand to ask them whether they'd have any use for a Mexican ex-wrestler who could also offer considerable nannying experience.

A day later, an Australian farmer called Tim Gadman got in touch to say that while he's "not involved in commercial poultry farming of any kind", and so couldn't offer King a job (we think he was lying), he nevertheless admired King's enthusiasm and wished him "the best of luck in chasing that dream!" It was clear that this was King's destiny.

A man called Mr Curry from the American Poultry Association mailed us to ask what *specific* experience King could bring to a poultry farm. We wrote back to say that King had experienced both chicken *and* turkey, and disliked their tastes intensely. Mr Curry is yet to reply with a concrete job offer.

One more farmer told King to get lost. Another – from New Zealand – used even stronger language. Please note how we avoided the phrase 'fowl language' there. It's to our eternal credit, we believe.

GET STUFFED

Nevertheless, we had more substantial success. An Australian involved in poultry said that he would pass on King's details to a landowning friend of his, who may well be very interested in employing him, as "you both seem to have really similar backgrounds." We sincerely hoped he was taking the piss. It seemed unlikely that the leap from South American orphanage-management to poultry farming in Australia is one that could ever be described as common.

It appears he *was* serious, though – two days later, his friend e-mailed King, saying that should he ever find himself in Australia, he should pop along to see the farm and meet the wife.

It was a beautiful moment. We'd not only identified King's ideal job, but we'd even found an Australian man who may well be willing to give leopard head a go and let him loose on his turkeys.

Hey, why not try finding a new job for *your* favourite fictional character...? PSM2

"WHHHYYY MEEEEE?" King's looking in the wrong place for inspiration. He should be looking in butchers.

"WE WROTE BACK TO SAY THAT KING HAD EXPERIENCED BOTH CHICKEN AND TURKEY, AND DISLIKED THEIR TASTES INTENSELY"

I FEEL LIKE CHICKEN FOR THE REST OF MY USELESS 'KING LIFE

Have you been inspired by King's efforts to land himself a job in the poultry business? Perhaps you've always liked chickens but never had the courage to get yourself a job working alongside them? Why not find out more at these recommended websites?

Eatchicken.com: *www.eatchicken.com*
National Turkey Federation: *www.turkeyfed.org*
Meat and Poultry Association: *www.meatandpoultryonline.com*
US Poultry and Egg Association: *www.poultryegg.org*

And to find out more information about where *your* interests really lie, and where *you* should be working, take the future-shaping JVIS test, at *http://www.jvis.com* today!

WOMAN! WHERE'S ME TEA? The message here is simple. Eat chicken. Y'see?

GET DOWN, CHEF: Bake 'em, grill 'em, fry 'em, eat 'em. Turkey's *so* versatile.

PRO POULTRY: All the poultry professional could want. Your one-stop-cock-shop.

LOCAL YOLK-ALL: It's not all breasts and thighs, y'know - don't forget the eggs.

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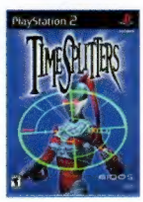

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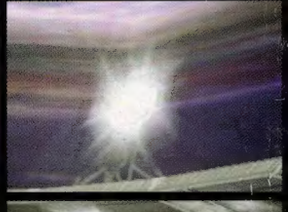
TOP GEAR DARE DEVIL



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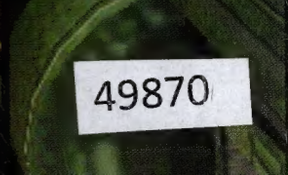
TIMESPLITTERS



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